EDITH WHARTON, VICTIM—BY ANDREW DELBANCO

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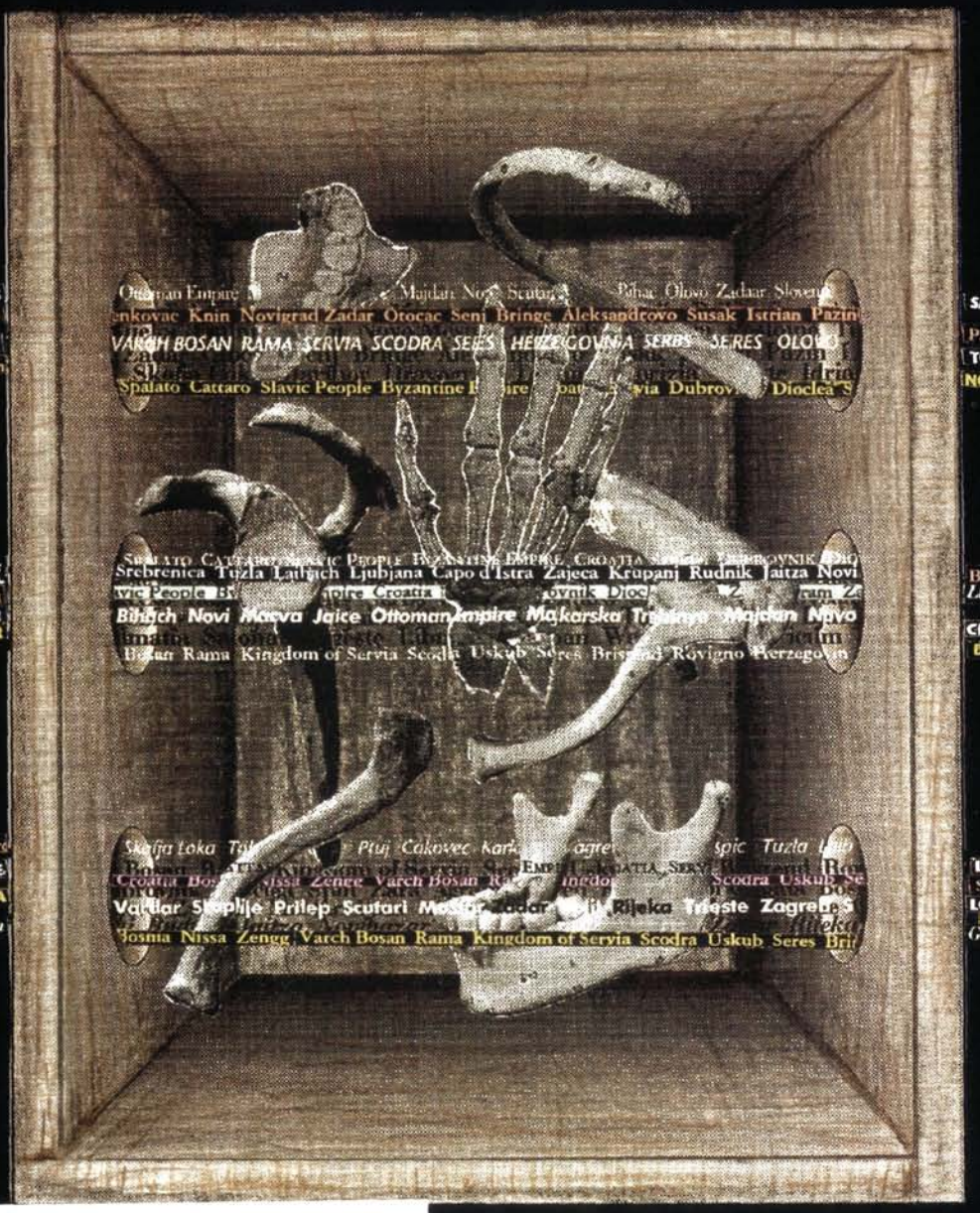

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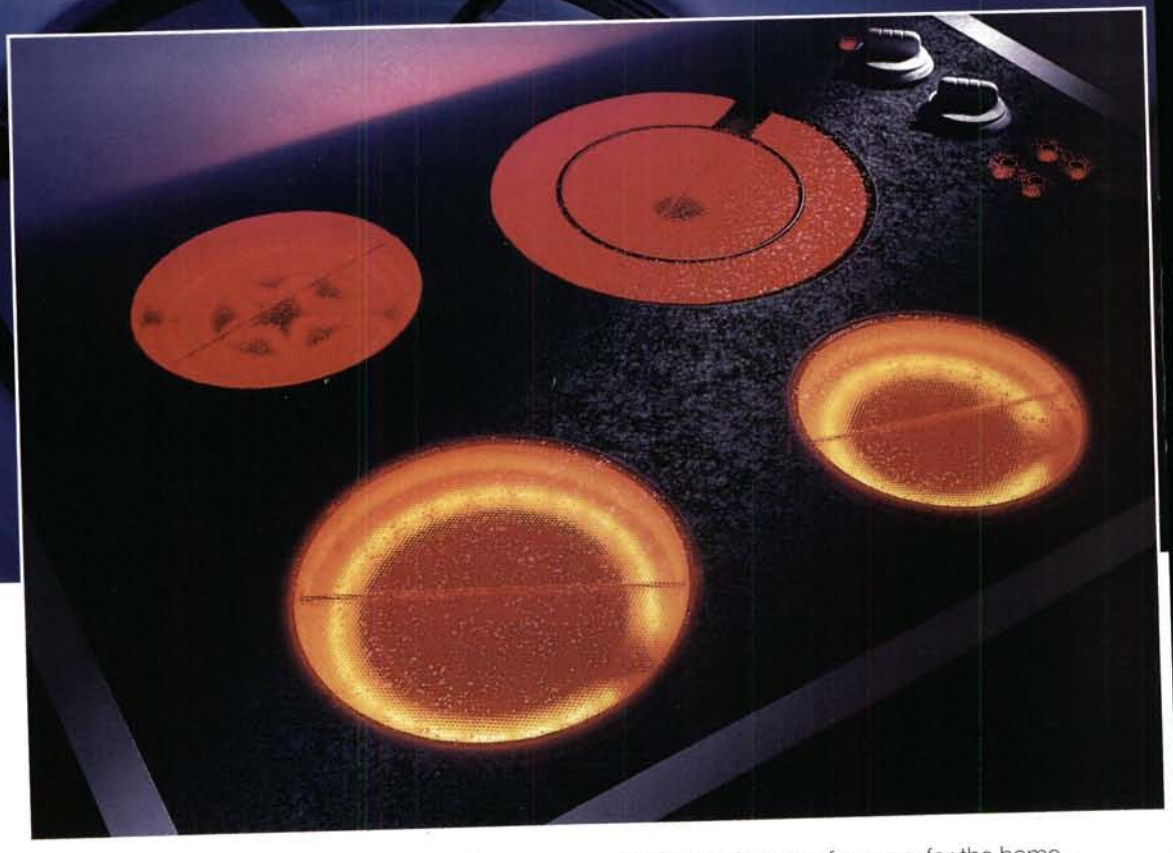

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

OCTOBER 25, 1993

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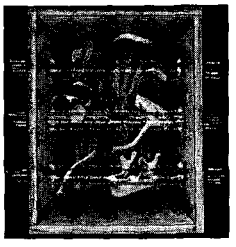

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CORRESPONDENCE

Return to sender

To the editors:

If my liberal buddy Michael Kinsley (TRB, "The Envelope Please," September 20 & 27) is bothered by the volume of mail he receives from us, all he had to do during the dozen years he's been on our media mailing list was call me up, or drop me a note and say, "Hey Berkowitz, don't send me so much." The fact that he never figured this out says a lot about the value of a Harvard education!

As for his specific concerns: 1) The overwhelming majority of our publications do not deal with specific legislation. Thus, the disclaimer that we are not attempting "to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress" is fully accurate. 2) If he thinks we were too critical of President Clinton's tax-and-spend budget, he should review the sixteen papers we published during the summer and fall of 1990 criticizing President Bush's tax-and-spend budget deal with Congress—you know, the deal that has kept the economy in slow motion ever since.

What obviously bothers Kinsley most, to quote him, is that "there is no liberal equivalent of The Heritage Foundation"—a lament that has been repeated by our friends on the left over and over again ever since Heritage burst onto the national scene. But Kinsley is like the rest: even when he thinks we're nuts, he knows we're the best in the business, and that the data we compile and publish is accurate and on target. While he and our other liberal friends frequently disagree with our conclusions, they rarely challenge our facts. Indeed, on at least one important issue now facing Washington, Kinsley thinks we're right on target, calling the Heritage Consumer Choice Health Plan "... the simplest, most promising, and in an important way, most progressive idea for health care reform."

HERB B. BERKOWITZ
Vice President
The Heritage Foundation
Washington, D.C.

Women's amendment

To the editors:

The debate between civil liberties and civil rights, as posed in Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s article ("Let Them Talk," September 20 & 27), sounds paradoxical when discussed in terms of the politics of race, but makes perfect sense in terms of the politics of gender.

Consider that laws are written as a reflection of the attitudes of the lawmakers, expressing how the lawmakers think we ought to behave. The Bill of Rights was written by men and expressed what was important to them. Had women framed the Bill of Rights, it most likely would have been different. (Not better or worse, just different.)

In the case of the First Amendment, consider that women tend, more than men, to value the harmony of a group, to seek consensus and to be sensitive to others' feelings. In social situations, women put more value on speech that maintains the harmony of a group than on speech that expresses exactly what's on one's mind. Further, women, in general, are more sensitive to the ability of language to hurt.

So, in writing the Bill of Rights, women might have covered the issues of political freedom with phrasing that reflected the right to hold and express various political beliefs, but not necessarily the freedom to utter harmful speech. This is in contrast to men, who, in general, would rather preserve the unfettered right to speak their minds on any and all topics.

Women have risen in political power in this country over the last few decades, and are running into laws that reflect male attitudes. The whole push toward controlling "hate speech" is a perfect reflection of women's normal social interaction. The existing First Amendment is a perfect reflection of men's normal social interaction.

As new laws are written that reflect more of the women's point of view, there will necessarily be conflict, especially along the battle lines of the age-old "war of the sexes." The current debate on freedom of speech versus control of hate speech is no different than that portrayed in countless stereotypical cartoons and sitcoms in which the woman of a couple is mortified at a party by the man's tactless expression of opinion.

DENNIS MERRITT
Stow, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s erudite and discriminating (dare we use that word?) article on the dilemmas and pitfalls of trying to regulate racist and hate speech was a necessary reminder of how easy it is to fall into the "inquisition" habit of mind. However, he omitted one form of "hate talk": impugning the reputation of a food. The agricultural industry is now engaged in promoting "anti-food defamation" legislation. Three states, Louisiana, Idaho and Georgia, already have legislation labeling

SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ

Critics everywhere are praising her "important and timely book about the barbarity being practiced in the Balkans." —Bettina Drew, *Chicago Tribune*

"Universal in its insights into the bestial, soul-devouring nature of war, any war."
—John Yemma, *Boston Globe*

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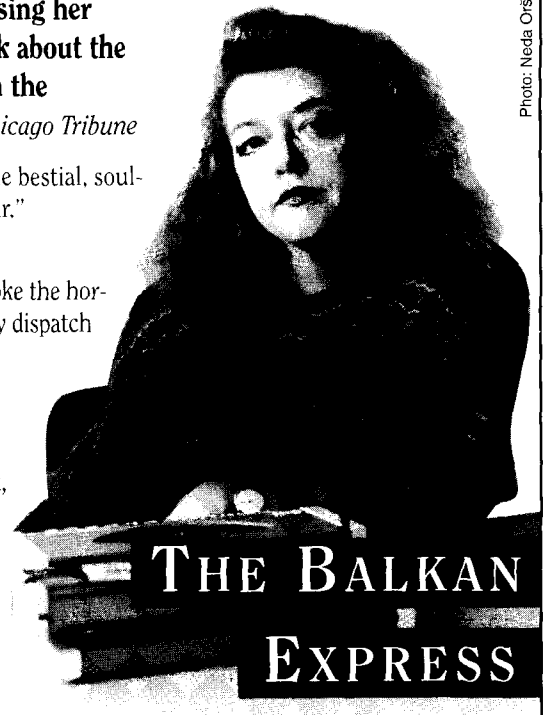

Photo: Neda Oršolić

THE BALKAN EXPRESS

FRAGMENTS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF WAR

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it a "civil offense" to publicly impugn the reputation of a food, without proof of that food's record.

My question is this: If a man calls a woman "a good looking chick" or "some tomato!" is he defaming the reputation of the woman or the food?

ROBERTA KALECHOFSKY
Marblehead, Massachusetts

Shocked

To the editors:

In Daniel Choi's brief "immigration debate guide" ("Border-Lines," September 16), he lifted quotes from two different articles written by me and published in *The Nation.* Using my words, he fills his own specious agenda by mischaracterizing me as a "left-wing restrictionist."

His first quote is from my article "Blacks, Immigrants and America," which appeared in the February 15 *Nation.* My article was concerned with the factors that led to the April/May 1992 riot in Los Angeles and how Black-Korean clashes, embodied in the shooting death of 15-year-old Latasha Harlins by Korean grocer Soon Ja Du, illustrated the long-festering ills of American racism as played out on local terrain. Integral to my article is my observation that the majority of Afro-Americans living in L.A., at no fault save skin color, are caught between the rock of racism and the hard place of immigration.

Choi doesn't understand the blood-and-bones impact of American immigration policy on the disadvantaged native-born. And Choi doesn't understand that I don't blame the new arrivals for American immigration policies. I do not blame the ladies from Mexico who were equally making sacrifices to likewise feed their families. That would be tantamount to blaming the slave for slavery. I do blame what Choi might label "the white male-dominated power structure," which encourages and exploits illegal labor at every opportunity. Those who have successfully looted the coffers of the nation are insisting that the rest of us settle for a downsized version of the American Dream, especially those of us who are black.

Nowhere in my first article do I suggest any restrictions on immigration. Nor do I mention restrictions in the second *Nation* article, "Surviving the Riot Watch," published in the May 17 issue, from which Choi extracts his second quote.

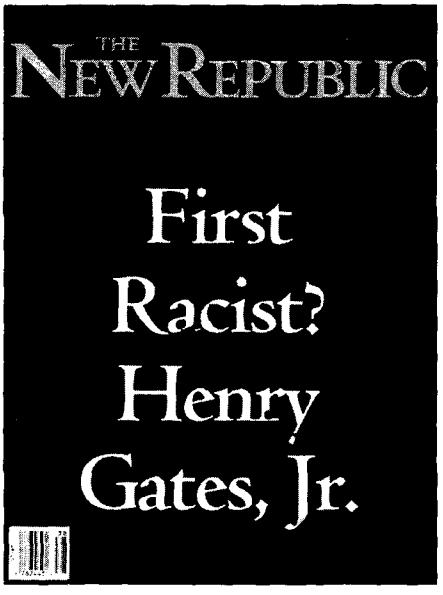
By tying these two quotes together, Choi fashions a bogus leap. At no point in my second article, which this time centered around the verdict in the federal trial of the officers who beat Rodney King, do I suggest that U.S. immigration be restricted. Thus, Choi succeeds not only in misrepresenting my views, but also in further muddying the language of a complex, ugly, but very necessary dialogue that must take place. He assigns me a fake leadership role as representative of a constituency that exists only in his imagination.

WANDA COLEMAN
Los Angeles, California

Confusion

To the editors:

Tony Rothman, in his article ("Cold Fusion," September 20 & 27), was extraordinarily moderate in discussing the deplorable state of affairs with respect to the development of fusion



power. I would have added several comments or questions. Ignoring the fact that fossil fuels ultimately will be exhausted while becoming prohibitively expensive, fusion power offers a world with unlimited, inexpensive power without the environmental consequences of burning petroleum, coal and gas, and without using atomic power. It is very surprising that the environmental people have not rallied to the fusion power cause. Certainly the Middle East and the world's fossil fuel interests are doing nothing to further the fusion power cause, and that accounts for the lack of interest on the part of Congress and the administration.

W. J. BOLGER
Guilford, Connecticut

To the editors:

Tony Rothman hoists himself on his own petard of confusing science projects with other projects. He criticizes politicians for "lumping" diverse projects together, but he then claims that all government programs should be evaluated by the same criteria. The criteria listed by Rothman—"value, cost and usefulness"—are important criteria, no doubt, but he misses their distributive content: value, cost and usefulness to whom? To scientists the implicit answer is in his disparaging of the space station. Yet as he rightly suggests, the space station survived, as the supercollider may not, exactly because its value, cost and usefulness are distributed in a broad way relative to the narrow value and usefulness—yet similarly broad cost—of the supercollider. The government is historically better at funding dams than science, and the space station is a better dam than the supercollider. It may be that fusion is an even better dam than the space station, but until its value, cost and usefulness can be made apparent to a broader and more diverse audience, don't expect it to do well in competition. Instead of disparaging the politicians who do understand the distributional politics of expensive projects, Rothman could work toward assuring that fusion technology, if it ever comes on line after decades of promises, really provides broad and diverse benefits to match its costs.

DAVID H. GUSTON
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Afflicted

To the editors:

A Notebook item in the October 4 issue asserts that a proposal pending in Congress to codify the ban on gays in the military would be "legislating for the first time in history actual discrimination against gay men and lesbians."

Not so. In the early 1950s, at the height of McCarthyism, Congress passed an immigration law that intended to exclude gay men and lesbians from immigrating to the United States by describing them as being "afflicted with psychopathic personality." When doubts were raised in the lower federal courts about whether gay people could be so characterized, Congress amended the law in the 1960s to exclude people "afflicted with sexual deviation." These provisions were repealed in 1990 as part of a general reform of the medical exclusions contained in U.S. immigration law.

ARTHUR S. LEONARD
New York, New York

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FROM WASHINGTON

Pete's plan

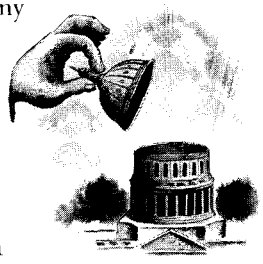
Pete Peterson's timing was pretty bad. The investment banker no doubt was hoping for a bigger splash for his "Concord Coalition" report on how to balance the federal budget by the year 2000. The nation has been deficit-obsessed for most of the past year. But by the time the document came out a couple of weeks ago, the only question for Washington agenda setters was whether NAFTA or health care reform deserved pride of place. And then events in far away Russia and Somalia drove domestic concerns, however briefly, off the table.

This is the kind of high-minded project by self-anointed worthies that anyone with any sense of humor at all ought to be suspicious of. Organized by Peterson, the "Concord Coalition" is officially co-chaired by two former senators: Democrat Paul Tsongas, whose dour "I'm no Santa Claus" theme went over so well, so briefly, in last year's presidential campaign; and Republican Warren Rudman, the very personification of flinty New England integrity. The vice chair is economist John White, who ran the budget numbers for Ross Perot last year, back when Perot was into honesty.

But the above sneering is merely self-defense on my part, a preface to saying that it's an excellent report. There's no point in arguing with those who believe the deficit is not a serious problem worth addressing, or worth addressing but not just now when we're emerging from a recession (as if there will ever be a more convenient six-year period). The Concord Coalition report has the conventional (and correct) answers to such arguments. But it is mainly a challenge to those—primarily politicians—who accept, indeed bray, that the deficit is a pressing problem. What principled objection can they make to the Concord Coalition's proposed solution?

The Concordians start where the Clinton budget leaves off—with a projected $250 billion deficit in the year 2000—and reduce it to zero with a combination of spending cuts ($154 billion), tax increases ($71 billion) and interest savings ($35 billion), less $10 billion in new investment-style government spending. Actually, there are plenty of specifics one might reasonably argue with. The arguments I would like to hear, though, are with the Coalition's biggest single item: its $68 billion proposal for means-testing entitlements.

The proposal is to reduce entitlement benefits—primarily Social Security, Medicare and farm price supports—by 10 percent for every $10,000 of income above $40,000, up to a maximum of 85 percent. So, for example, anyone with an income up to $40,000—which covers 58 percent of the populace—would not lose any benefits. Someone with $50,000 of income would give up 10 percent. Those with $120,000 and above would still keep 15 percent of their benefits.



This notion—no doubt politically suicidal—puts any honest politician in a bind. The bind for conservatives is simple and obvious. They are the ones who carry on loudest about government spending. Entitlements are more than half of all federal spending; four-fifths of all entitlement checks are issued without regard to the recipient's income. During the recent budget battle, there was much vague talk from the GOP about entitlement "caps," as if this could be achieved without cutting anyone's benefits. Peterson offers a real entitlement "cap."

And I would like to hear the populist anti-government ranters like Perot and Rush Limbaugh explain what objection they could have to this idea. What I'd really like, of course, is for them to get behind it. They could use their bully pulpits, and their freedom from re-election worries, to do the country some good.

But the bind for the honest liberal is equally severe. Do liberals really stand for transferring money from poorer people to richer ones? Yes, of course, $40,000 a year is far from rich. People living on $40,000 are middle class, with the usual middle-class worries (although entitlement beneficiaries making that much are likely to be retired with grown-up kids and no mortgage). Even so, however, the unavoidable fact is that most American families earn less than $40,000. The money in entitlement checks doesn't come from nowhere. It comes from taxes paid by (or increased national debt incurred on behalf of) other Americans: families making, on average, less than $40,000.

This is especially true of Social Security, which is financed regressively: by a flat tax on wages up to a ceiling, with investment income completely exempt. And today's Social Security beneficiaries are indeed being paid largely out of taxes on current workers, since their combined employee-employer contributions, plus interest, don't begin to equal the benefits they receive.

If "progressive" means reducing income inequality, then, means-testing entitlements in this way would make the net effect of the federal government on society more progressive. If liberals object, they are saying that they favor government spending that has no other effect except to increase income inequality.

In a way, this huge government spending cut should be more appealing to liberals than the Concord Coalition's biggest proposed tax increase—a 50-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax (revenues: $45 billion in 2000). A gas tax is regressive: it takes a bigger share of income from lower-income people. There are other good reasons to support it—national security and environmental concerns, as well as the revenue—but its income-distribution effect is negative.

To be sure, as my TNR colleague Mickey Kaus argues in his book, *The End of Equality* (just out in paperback—plug, plug), the liberal vision of government should not consist solely of reducing income inequality. (In fact, he doesn't think it should include reducing income inequality at all, but that's another story.) Entitlement programs, however, are just check writing. All they do is redistribute income. Under such circumstances, it seems to me, redistributing income upward is pretty hard to justify.

And the argument you sometimes hear that entitlement checks must be issued without regard to need in order to bind us together as a society strikes me as a pretty lame excuse for spending $68 billion a year. Under the Concord plan we all would still get our checks from the government, for whatever symbolic value that may have. The checks would just get smaller as we move up the income scale. In any event, it sounds like a parody of the liberal vision to say that what unites us as Americans is that we all get checks from the government. It may be almost true, but is it something to celebrate?

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 25, 1993

THE BLACK HOUSE

It was not a pretty sight, the blackening of the White House; but the White House had already been blackened by the flotsam and jetsam of Russian reaction that had turned it into the headquarters of an ugly insurrection, and anyway the invention of democracy has never been a pretty sight. There exists a strange and sentimental myth that democracy is established democratically, when in fact it has always been the result of the rude, physical deposing of authoritarianism. The early democrats are the muscular democrats, the ones who understand that sometimes the danger to democracy is not politely philosophical. For all his flaws, Boris Yeltsin has proved to be such a classically early, classically muscular democrat.

Popular support in Russia for Yeltsin's assault on the rebels appears to be so widespread as to be platitudinous. The assault on the rebels seems to have struck most Russians as an acceptable measure for the advancement of reform. It is only here that one hears Yeltsin condemned in the name of reform. "Will all opposition in Russia now be considered criminal?" a left-wing American journalist on CNN irately demanded to know. Never mind that many of the camp followers of Aleksandr Rutskoi and Ruslan Khasbulatov *were* criminals. The conclusion that some Americans (the president of the United States, thankfully, is not among them) are drawing from the dramatic events in Moscow is that every user of physical force is like every other user of physical force, that Yeltsin undermined his own legitimacy when he ordered the army into action. This is addled. The enemies of democracy are not just another element of democracy. And democracy is not anarchy. When Yeltsin became the freely elected president of Russia, he also became the individual with the responsibility to defend the conditions for such free expressions of popular will; and also the individual with the authority to defend those conditions of freedom with the use of force.

Indeed, the cautionary lesson to be learned from the battle at the White House is exactly the opposite: not that democrats may make use of fascist means, but that fascists may make use of democratic means. The parliamentary and constitutional prestige enjoyed by Rutskoi, Khasbulatov and company was a farce. The institutions that they transformed into the bases of their power were communist institutions posing as liberal institutions. Communism, remember, loved to trick itself out in liberal words and things: in laws, courts, parliaments and the like. Behind these simulacra of legitimacy, raw power could more comfortably hide. And so it continued to hide in the White House in recent weeks, until thousands of communists and fascists (it was always a natural fellowship) were no longer happy to hide, and revealed the true character of their politics by rampaging through the streets, attacking the television station and the Moscow municipal building and killing innocent people.

All this is not to say that Boris Yeltsin is Thomas Jefferson. He is moving his country in directions that are new to him, too. We do not doubt that some of the support he won for his battle was owed to a certain autocratic satisfaction that he suddenly seemed to provide; and the shutting down of the opposition's newspapers, and the sudden censorship of even friendly newspapers, was disturbing. Most important, the burden of proof is now almost entirely his. Yeltsin must demonstrate that he took up arms with the aim of laying them down, that it was democracy, and not just his profit of democracy, that he was protecting. The sooner presidential and parliamentary elections are held, the better.

For now, though, the battle for the White House has provided democrats everywhere with timely instruction. It has deliciously reversed the romance of the barricades. This time the barricades were manned by soldiers of the state, and the roles of doomed revolutionaries were played by doomed reactionaries; but the romance held. The Russian army opened fire on the White House in October 1993 for exactly the same reason that the Russian army did not open fire on the White House in August 1991. That reason is democratic reform. It is a little exhilarating, especially in Russia, to see democratic reform unembarrassed by its own strength. •

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NOTEBOOK

BOSNIA, SOMALIA: It is a little absurd, as Russia, the Balkans, the Middle East and South Africa are all in the middle of their historical crucibles, that the foreign policy crisis that most exercises the administration is Somalia. The sentimentalization of foreign policy that occurs every time an American soldier anywhere is taken prisoner seems to be occurring again. The president would be wise not to listen to talk radio this week. Mogadishu, of course, is a problem. In Somalia, the initial decision to intervene to save hundreds of thousands of lives was a prudent, moral and modest goal. But the overweaning ambition of the U.N. to expand the Somalian mission into something more extensive and more political was something that the United States should have resisted. If that meant ending the operation, so be it. We were never in a position to promise that we would leave behind a country in which the political conditions for famine would never again appear. And the trap that now ensnares the administration in Somalia casts light on the responsibility that should have ensnared it in Bosnia. The administration—in practice, if not in theory—has abided by the notion that it has two options in foreign policy: inaction or ambitious multilateralism. It has chosen inaction in Bosnia and overly ambitious multilateralism in Somalia. It was the wrong choice in each case. And so now Clinton is faced with a cruel choice in Somalia: to surrender to the isolationism of the public and the opportunism of the Republicans in Congress, or to become more implicated in a political and military sinkhole. We think that he should extract our captives and punish Aideed with appropriate force, and then, without undue haste, withdraw. We will meet our interventionist responsibilities elsewhere.

NOW OUR JOB IS TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T JUST SIT ON A SHELF GATHERING DUST.
GORE REPORT ON GOV'T WASTE
THEN I'M GOING TO NEED A BIGGER STAFF.
C.P.D.S.R.G.W.
COMMISSION FOR THE PERPETUAL DUSTING OF SHELVED REPORTS ON GOVERNMENT WASTE
AND I WAS THINKING CABINET STATUS...
TOLES
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PALESTINE AGAIN: The United Jewish Appeal was not what the major Zionist philanthropy was always called. In the years before the state of Israel was established, and for some time after, the organization went by the name of United Palestine Appeal. Of course, in that era the Arabs of Mandate Palestine did not see themselves as Palestinians but as Arabs belonging to the one Arab people; it was the Jews who called themselves Palestinians. Times have changed, and the Arabs of Palestine now call themselves Palestinians. Whatever polity they create will be called Palestine, which was the label the Romans attached to the land. And, lo and behold, there is once again something like the United Palestine Appeal, to whose founding in Washington last week the government of Israel offered a $75 million down payment. The Clinton administration had convened an international conference of forty-three potential donor countries, and the conference closed with some $2 billion pledged for the West Bank and Gaza over the next five years. The United States promised 25 percent of the total. This is a lot of money, particularly since the government has failed to show how the expenditure will promote market democracy. This $500 million is, moreover, a lot more than the Saudis have committed. (The other super-rich Arab oil states have offered nothing.) A *New York Times* editorial gushed over the Saudi pledge of $100 million, terming it not only "unexpected," but "generous." It isn't, certainly not in comparison with how lavishly Saudi Arabia financed the PLO during its murderous years. To be sure, sources close to the monarchy hint that Riyadh might be ready to give the Palestinians $1 billion over the next decade. But they don't explain their reticence to say so. We'll see soon enough. What we won't see very soon is the end of the Arab economic boycott of Israel. Secretary of State Warren Christopher made no headway in persuading Arab governments that, given Israel's acceptance of the PLO as a political partner, it was time for them to accept Israel as a commercial partner. Fouad Ajami has written that the Israel-PLO agreement deprives the Arabs of their alibi for all sorts of pathologies. He is right: the alibi is gone. But will the pathologies disappear? The rejection of Christopher's initiative suggests that they will be around for some time. •

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MOSCOW POSTCARD

OORA! OORA!

By Liesl Schillinger

By midnight Sunday in Moscow, the government tanks were pulling up to the White House and to Ostankino, Russia's state television station, from which, five hours earlier, a photographer and I had been running, as the machine-gun fire started to patter and the crowd started to scream. We had watched as a green truck of the anti-Yeltsin contingent rammed the doors of one of the Ostankino buildings, the crowd crying "Oora!, Oora!" and waving red flags. As the truck backed up, then slammed into the doors again, glass shattering, metal buckling, there was still a sense that this must not be for real, that the drab, old-fashioned trucks were part of a giant model-train landscape gone haywire, a vehicular *Jurassic Park*. In spite of the thousands of angry and sometimes armed men, including government soldiers who hid behind metal shields; in spite of the pro-Yeltsin snipers inside the buildings, shadowed against windows; in spite of the relentless rush of honking cars and commandeered trucks and buses carrying more protesters, who whooped from windows triumphantly; and in spite of the military trucks that passed, blaring orders for everyone to leave—the first shots came as a surprise.

The shots were followed by more shots, and then the clang of metal dropping into grenade launchers, and then there was an explosion, and, soon after, there was fire. The ground shook, and as we fled, Russians who were taking cover further up the road asked us what was happening back at the doors, and took to their heels for the mile run to the metro station when we told them.

By morning, Ostankino had been taken back by Yeltsin's army, and the White House was under siege. At 7 a.m., from the balcony of my apartment 800 yards from the White House, twenty-four floors up, I watched the tanks and personnel carriers roll down Novy Arbat toward the building. Within the hour, the balcony shuddered. There was an exchange of machine-gun fire. Later, shells exploded and the sky shook. On the morning news, the anchor said, "I cannot wish you good morning today, on a day when innocent people have shed blood."

There had been a tendency not to take the growing discontent of anti-Yeltsin demonstrators too seriously. Life was improving in Yeltsin's Moscow—for the small minority of the criminal, the foreign and the lucky, at least. And, despite the painful reforms and the inflation, the less fortunate majority still had hope that it would be better off than it had been before. On Saturday, the 500-year anniversary of the Arbat, Moscow's picturesque pedestrian zone, shoppers stopped to watch a man with painted lips and a ruffled shirt standing grandly in front of a banner for a company that sells state-owned property to private investors. The audience, heavily cloaked and eating hot dogs, watched as the performer took a dagger and placed the handle between his lips. He held the knife in his mouth, and then, with a subtle gesture, balanced an elaborate candelabra on its tip. Craning his neck, he performed delicate arabesques to the song, "The show must go on." The audience applauded in relief as the candelabra remained aloft. But at the other end of the Arbat, on Garden Ring Road near the new McDonald's, all balance was lost. Hundreds of imperialists, hardliners, Communists, fascists, army fans and other anti-Yeltsin people were building barricades. Police and militia flanked the road, but did nothing to stop them. The barricades, some seventy yards wide, were made of corrugated steel, wooden crates, iron rods, smashed stoves and an occasional car. Old men dragged unwieldy sheets of metal along the road, shoring up the piles, and children helped their parents by throwing bottles of gasoline onto the heap. "You Americans, you are killing the Russian people," the fanatics shouted. "Yeltsin is an asshole," another cried. Some of the protesters tried to smash the windows of the McDonald's, which had to be closed. Then a match was thrown onto the barricade, and the fire caught, hissing as it grew. A car exploded, black smoke hung in the air and somewhere between McDonald's and a store called Success the new Russia seemed to go up in flames.

The next morning, Sunday, the White House was flanked by a semicircle of orange trucks and bordered in loops of clean, silver razor wire. Though the 19-year-old militiamen in dusty faux-fur hats and wool overcoats grandiosely denied entry to all comers, they seemed more like gatekeepers of the Emerald City of Oz than soldiers who were about to enter into the bloodiest fighting in Moscow since 1917. Journalists pleaded to be allowed into the White House, where, they said cynically, they would offer the parliamentary holdouts, who had been complaining about their lack of fresh linen, clean underwear for quotes. They did not expect much of a story, but a few hours later one came, when the boys in furry hats were beaten by Aleksandr Rutskoi supporters; and the boys started beating back. The protesters, who had massed at October Square earlier, singing patriotic songs and selling Communist dailies and pamphlets with names like *Yids* ("the curse of Russia"), had whipped themselves into a frenzy, and run en masse to the White House, where Rutskoi exhorted them to take over Ostankino.

Today, people in Moscow are calling the White House the Black House. Rutskoi and Ruslan Khasbulatov are in prison, and Yeltsin has reasserted his fragile hold on power. It was clear who were the good guys and who were the bad guys in the weekend's battle; when the

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Troopers

Why did the Russian Ministry of Defense initially proclaim neutrality in the political struggle between Russia's president and its parliament, and then suddenly declare its support for Boris Yeltsin? Why did the military leadership balk at using its forces to end the occupation of the parliament building, but then finally call in the tanks to blast away its facade? The nagging feeling among many observers is that the military held out in order to extract substantial IOUs from Yeltsin for more military spending, new weapons and tougher policies toward the former Soviet republics. Some have even suggested that Defense Minister Pavel Grachev has become the second most powerful man in Russia.

This kind of simplistic kremlinology was wide of the mark during the Soviet era, and it certainly has no basis in fact now. In the context of contemporary Russian domestic politics there is no such entity as "the Russian military." The Russian army is increasingly a mirror of Russia itself—a loosening confederation of divergent interests and authorities drifting inexorably away from Moscow. Where once "the High Command"—the Ministry of Defense bureaucracy and the General Staff—could speak for the politics of a 5-million-man organization spread across a dozen time zones, today its voice may not carry much further than the corridors of its own buildings in Moscow.

Indeed, General Grachev is not the all-powerful chief of an obedient and disciplined military machine. Rather, he is more like the newly installed chairman of a large corporation recently acquired in a hostile takeover. In May of 1992, he was put in place by outside forces (Yeltsin), leapfrogging senior officers who had invested years being groomed for the top job. He replaced long-time Ministry apparatchiks with his own team (airborne forces), and proposed a series of radical—and widely unpopular—military reforms designed to transform the military from a slow-moving ground force behemoth into a lithe, easily deployable, rapid response force. Not surprisingly, he is resented by many who are ostensibly under his command. He exerts control over the military through a combination of consensus and benign neglect.

When the Russian government first split two weeks ago, Grachev's personal loyalty was never in doubt: having clashed often with Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoi (like Grachev, a hero of the war in Afghanistan), he was sure to go if Yeltsin was ousted. But Grachev had no idea where his organization stood or how its regional and service commands might react. He certainly knew not to take their obedience for granted—a mistake the former Soviet Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov made in planning the August 1991 coup against Mikhail Gorbachev. Ironically, Grachev owed his present status to the fact that he was one of the commanders who had disobeyed direct orders from Yazov and the other coup-plotters to storm the very building that two years later was being occupied by anti-Yeltsin forces.

Given the uncertainties and risks, Grachev chose the only sensible course: publicly remain aloof while working behind-the-scenes to rally the army. Several days of consultations with the commands may have convinced him that it was safe to back his boss—at least rhetorically—when it became obvious that the standoff was not going to end quickly. (Some Russian military sources claim that Rutskoi supporters were polling the commands at the same time.)

Even after declaring that the army was behind Yeltsin, the Ministry of Defense opposed using its forces to break the stalemate at the parliament building. The August 1991 coup was a horrifying lesson for the military leadership: using military forces to intervene in elite politics is a prescription for the disintegration of the military establishment itself. Many officers and soldiers would oppose assault operations to dislodge the parliamentarians. If Grachev acted on his own authority he might further discredit himself within the military establishment.

But the entire calculus changed when Parliament leader Ruslan Khasbulatov and his designated president Rutskoi unleashed their heavily armed minions to attack the government buildings and attempt to seize the Yeltsin government. The large-scale violence that engulfed Moscow on Sunday shifted the framework within which the military would act. At a contentious meeting in the Defense Ministry on Sunday night, the military leadership reluctantly agreed that force should be used to stop the revolt from spreading. Restoring public order in the capital, gaining control of unsecured weapons stocks, ending what had become an armed insurrection and protecting their comrades could be easily explained and understood by the commands, their officers and the troops.

Elements of the elite Taman and Kantemirovsky divisions and the 106 Tula Airborne (Grachev's old command) were used to retake the parliament. They had been preparing for just this type of mission for almost five years. And they had a long and paradoxical history of involvement with Moscow coups. These units—training in Moscow under government orders in the spring and fall of 1990—had set off a flurry of wrong-headed reports of a military revolt against the Gorbachev regime. (The show of force was actually meant to frighten the growing democracy movement.) These were also the units that were expected to seize control of Moscow and capture Boris Yeltsin and his comrades in August 1991. Perhaps most importantly, their commands had been intentionally kept responsive to Grachev's authority.

All that the vast bulk of the armed forces had to do was sit tight, which is probably all that Grachev asked of them. The insurrection was limited to Moscow and could be contained. Had violence erupted across the country, the outcome might not have been so tidy. Military units outside of Moscow have neither the training, indoctrination, readiness nor the discipline of these elite squads.

To be sure, the Ministry of Defense may expect pay and pension supplements and additional housing to follow in the aftermath of this event. But the idea that it was able to parlay the government's troubles into some grand bargain with Yeltsin is pure fantasy. In this case, Yeltsin's gratitude is likely to amount to little more than a smile and a handshake.

STEPHEN M. MEYER

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anti-Yeltsin forces took over Ostankino, they cut off all the television stations. When Yeltsin's forces took Ostankino back, the television stations were turned back on, with their Western ads, their videos and their spots for privatization and exchange rates. Democracy—in the sense of the right to advertise—was back. But on Tuesday, in several normal, non-Communist newspapers, there were white spots where editorials with anti-Yeltsin content were to run. On the streets, Yeltsin's state of emergency was felt, as troops with machine guns stopped and searched any car they wanted. There were rumors of skirmishes in Leningrad, but they were not being reported in Moscow, and there was a sense that, once again, the Russian people were going to be put through another form of government imposed by dictat; this time, capitalism.

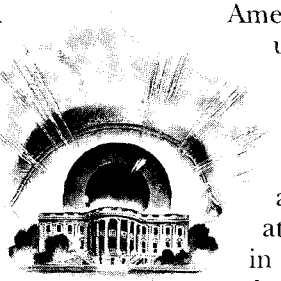
LIESL SCHILLINGER is a freelance writer.

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE INSIDER

By Fred Barnes

In a private meeting with President Cesar Gaviria Trujillo of Colombia at the United Nations on September 27, President Clinton was surprised that the North American Free Trade Agreement was the only thing Gaviria wanted to talk about. NAFTA applies to Mexico, not Colombia. But Gaviria insisted NAFTA must be ratified. Some day it would be extended to Colombia, he said, increasing trade and reducing his country's reliance on cocaine as a cash crop. Clinton took note of Gaviria's passionate support, then recounted it to a dozen House members undecided on NAFTA four days later. And if that wasn't convincing enough, Clinton had another resourceful ploy. Should they encounter anti-NAFTA pressure from important campaign contributors, just call Clinton. He'd be happy to talk personally with any NAFTA foe. Republican Representative Paul Gillmor of Ohio was impressed. He'd been unsure if Clinton was really pushing for NAFTA or just going through the motions. Clinton's for real on NAFTA, he concluded.



This much Clinton has achieved: he's erased doubts about his commitment to ratifying the agreement. "He's gotten himself more and more into this intellectually," says David Gergen, Clinton's counselor. The president summons small groups of undecided House members to the White House every other day. By the time NAFTA is voted on in mid-November, he expects to have courted every undeclared representative face-to-face.

But something is missing. For all his zeal, Clinton misses opportunity after opportunity to make the case for NAFTA forcefully and in public. And this raises the suspicion, not only among Republicans, that he is playing a finesse game. Sure, he wants the treaty ratified, but not if it means confronting core constituency groups in the Democratic Party opposed to NAFTA, such as organized labor. He hopes to win without riling anyone whose support he'll need when running for re-election. That's the suspicion, anyway. The trouble with a tame game is that it may not work. NAFTA is in jeopardy in the House (Senate passage seems assured) because public opinion is sour on it. To reverse that, Clinton needs to tout the treaty noisily day after day. This is what a senior Clinton adviser calls "public education." But this the president isn't doing.

When Mercedes Benz announced in late September plans to locate a new assembly plant in Alabama, Clinton ignored it. The Mercedes decision was a fresh example of why jobs don't flow to Mexico now and won't if NAFTA passes. Mercedes could have gone to Mexico and hired low-wage workers, but it picked an Alabama site (between Birmingham and Tuscaloosa) to be nearer to its market and because there are skilled workers, good transportation facilities, etc. My guess is that Clinton didn't hail the Mercedes decision because the plant will be non-union.

Certainly his October 4 speech to the AFL-CIO convention in San Francisco shows he's reluctant to provoke labor opposition. It was a perfect moment to promote NAFTA pugnaciously, perhaps get booed and attract media coverage. Instead, Clinton was apologetic. "Is it a perfect agreement?" he asked. "No. But I don't want to make the perfect the enemy of the better. I think it is better than the present." Some salesmanship. It got worse. Clinton said NAFTA has become "the symbol of the legitimate grievances of the American working people about the way they've been worked over in the last twelve years. That's what I think. And I think those grievances are legitimate." Sorry, but NAFTA represents something else for labor leaders. It may create more American jobs, but chances are they won't be unionized. And Clinton gets no credit for merely raising NAFTA before a hostile group. If he hadn't, the press would have ragged him.

Clinton aides say there's no reason for another Sister Souljah speech (which alienated Jesse Jackson but won votes for Clinton in 1992). Republicans who want one have an ulterior motive. "They're hoping by pursuing George Bush's NAFTA we'll damage ourselves with Democratic constituencies in 1996," says an administration official. The White House line is: NAFTA is doing fine without speeches angering Democratic groups. "We're gonna win," says Clinton aide George Stephanopoulos. Even Republican supporters of NAFTA think its prospects have improved. "I'm encouraged," says Representative Jim Kolbe of Arizona, the Republi-

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can point-man on the agreement.

Two things have buoyed NAFTA backers. One is a new *Los Angeles Times* poll showing support for NAFTA by 42 percent to 37 percent among those paying attention to the issue. The other is the success of Clinton's inside game. He's in a deal-making mood. His agents have promised Democratic Representative Lewis Payne of Virginia that the textile industry will be protected. Now they're working on a deal with representatives from fruit and sugar states. Democratic Senator John Breaux of Louisiana is bent on saving sugar growers again, as he did in 1981. Then, he backed Reagan's budget, insisting he hadn't sold his vote, only "rented" it. The most ambitious deal would be with labor leaders, getting their promise not to pull campaign money in 1994 from otherwise pro-labor Democrats who vote for NAFTA. Should this deal be cut, Clinton's wimpy AFL-CIO speech might be justified.

However, the deal doesn't guarantee ratification in the House. NAFTA will be lucky to get 100 Democratic votes. "The one really dominating fact is there were only ninety Democrats who voted for fast track" consideration of NAFTA in 1991, says Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, who opposes the treaty. The others are firmly against NAFTA, he says. That means Clinton needs as many as 130 Republican votes. This is possible, but not without a strong outside game aimed at altering public opinion. The *L.A. Times* poll suggests that the more people know about NAFTA, the more they like it. "Clinton's got to concentrate on this, not on health care," argues Kolbe.

Clinton has something else in mind. He wants to do a NAFTA event each week, but even that's not locked into his schedule. Already planned is a photo opportunity with USA NAFTA, the business group backing the treaty, at which Clinton will inspect a roomful of products exported to Mexico. Sounds nice, but it's hardly enough. Stephanopoulos says the NAFTA strategy is 60 percent inside game, 40 percent outside. For NAFTA to pass, that ratio better be reversed, and fast. •

COURT WATCH

GERRYMANDERED

By Jeffrey Rosen

On the first day of the new term, the Supreme Court revisited the question that undid Lani Guinier: How much racial gerrymandering does the Constitution permit, and the Voting Rights Act require? In her opaque majority opinion in *Shaw* v. *Reno* last June, Sandra Day O'Connor flirted with, and then retreated from, the argument that the Constitution always forbids states from carving out black and Hispanic electoral districts, even as a remedy for past discrimination. Over the past three months, however, lower courts and litigants have seized on O'Connor's dramatic rhetoric about "racial apartheid" to challenge the premises of the Voting Rights Act itself. In two related Florida cases, the Court now has the opportunity to articulate a better principle: the Constitution does not forbid the creation of minority districts, but the Voting Rights Act does not always require it.

Much of the confusion flows from Congress's refusal to make its intentions clear when it amended the Voting Rights Act in 1982. The ostensible purpose of the 1982 amendments was to give minorities the power to challenge election systems throughout the country by focusing on discriminatory results rather than on discriminatory intentions. The success rates of minority candidates, Congress declared, would be one way of determining whether minority voters have an equal opportunity "to participate in the political process and to elect representatives of their choice." Somewhat ambivalently, the amendments also disavowed any intention of creating a right of "proportional representation" for minorities.

The racially charged premises of the 1982 amendments came to a head in the *Shaw* case last June. After the 1990 census, North Carolina proposed to create only one congressional district with a black majority; but the Bush Justice Department demanded two. A less distorted minority district might have been created in the southeastern part of the state, but it would have carved through the power base of Democratic incumbents. To protect their own seats, the incumbents decided instead to create the serpentine I-85 district. The *Wall Street Journal* compared it to "political pornography"; the Court called it "tortured," "dramatically irregular," "bizarre" and "irrational," and struck it down as a form of "political apartheid."

There is an odd disjunction in *Shaw* between O'Connor's bold rhetoric and her elusive holding. The opinion is suffused with language that, if taken seriously, would require striking down the amended Voting Rights Act itself. (Antonin Scalia and Anthony Kennedy have toyed with this possibility in the past and are likely to resurrect it in the future.) "Racial gerrymandering, even for remedial purposes, may balkanize us into competing racial factions," O'Connor writes. But she then refuses to say whether the deliberate creation of minority districts, by itself, violates the Constitution.

The only constitutional value that O'Connor identifies is an aesthetic value. The problem with I-85, she says, is not that it segregates voters on the basis of race, but that it looks bizarre and therefore *appears* to segregate voters on the basis of race. Like Potter Stewart's definition of obscenity, this is an exquisitely subjective mandate for judges to strike down minority (and only minority) districts that offend their personal tastes. And O'Connor's premise—that the bizarre shape of the I-85 district can only be understood as a racial gerrymander—is puzzling. As Richard Pildes of the University of Michigan notes,

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

Biting the Health Care Bullet

Why am I writing a column about President Clinton's health care initiative? When I was president of the United Federation of Teachers in New York City, the cost of health care always played a big part in our contract negotiations. An excellent program we had in the 1960s became poorer with each contract because of increases in health care costs. Also, because of these increases, the amount of money available to improve pay and working conditions decreased year by year. My experience in New York City is the experience of school systems all across the country. Teachers and other educators have a vital concern about the increased costs of health care because the more we spend on health care, the less is available for education.

Now that changes are proposed, union members, like others, are worried about whether the new health care plan will be better or worse than the one they have. Those of us who have very good plans would like to hold on to them. But we must realize that rapidly rising costs mean we won't be able to—unless there is a radical change in the system. Health care now takes up 14 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the cost is increasing at a rate that is much greater than inflation. Also, given the rapid and unexpected rise of unemployment in some sectors, many people who are used to having a good employer-paid plan may suddenly find that they have to pay their own way for a less desirable plan—if they can get any coverage at all.

We are paying 35 to 40 percent more for health care than other industrialized countries. That might be all right if we were healthier and living longer, but we're just paying more.

Our situation with respect to health care costs reminds me of a story about a mythical but nonetheless very instructive experiment with a frog. We know that frogs move very quickly. If a frog jumped into a pot of boiling water, it would jump right out. It might get some blisters, but they would heal and the frog would be fine. But if you put the frog in a pot of cool water and lit the flame under it, the frog would slowly get adjusted. It would think, "Gee, the water's getting warm," but it would not realize what was happening until, eventually, the water would boil—and you'd have frog soup.

That's what happening to health care costs. They've gone from 6 percent of our GDP in 1963 to a projected 14 percent in 1993. Somewhere around the turn of the century, the annual bill will rise to 20 percent of our GDP. In other words, 20 percent of all the goods and services we produce in the U.S. will be used to pay for health care. And there is no reason to think that costs will stop increasing.

If health care had risen from 6 to 14 percent of our GDP in one year, you could be sure that we'd be out there saying, "Do something about this!" "It's absolutely untenable—an outrage!" But we haven't noticed that the water has been slowly moving up to the boiling point.

Many people are concerned with the costs of the national health program President Clinton has proposed, but they ought to be more concerned with the costs of our current system. President Clinton's plan is designed to control these runaway costs, but with the current system, we're going to end up paying in many ways. We'll have to raise taxes and cut programs in order to pay for increases in Medicare and Medicaid. Union members will get poorer contracts. We'll be unable to compete in selling our products, which will be more expensive because of higher health care costs—and that means a loss of jobs. We are paying 35 to 40 percent more for health care than other industrialized countries. That might be all right if we were healthier and living longer, but we're just paying more.

The President has shown great courage and leadership in taking on an issue that most people think is impossible to deal with because he knows it is absolutely central to solving many of our other problems. His presidential campaign and his activities and those of the First Lady since he became President have helped to establish a consensus that the problem must be solved and a set of basic principles to guide the reform. There are many loose ends and all sorts of legitimate concerns on the part of doctors, health care workers, senior citizens and others. But President Clinton says he wants to listen. And when all is said and done, the need to have a national system is overriding.

You often hear, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Well, our health care system *is* broken, and we have to do something about it. President Clinton has initiated a national discussion to create a system that will give Americans health security without bankrupting us. He needs everyone's help in doing this. He also deserves our respect and gratitude for biting the bullet on a change that is absolutely essential.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker

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the odd shape of the district actually reflects the self-interested maneuvering of white incumbents.

It is also hard to argue that strange shapes represent a departure from "traditional" districting principles. Describing the North Carolina district in *Shaw*, O'Connor quotes a state legislator's joke: "If you drove down the interstate with both car doors open, you'd kill most of the people in the district." But as Samuel Issacharoff of the University of Texas points out, the joke dates back to the 1970s, and originally described Phil Gramm's weirdly shaped district in Texas.

It is already conventional wisdom to compare O'Connor's opinion in *Shaw* to Lewis Powell's opinion in *Bakke*, the affirmative action case. Both seem to say that you can take race into account, as long as you do so subtly rather than overtly. But in fact, Powell's logic is easier to grasp than O'Connor's. Affirmative action programs in universities create individual winners and losers. But redistricting, by definition, affects group interests rather than individual interests; and no white voters in North Carolina claimed that the plan had diluted their votes.

The practical effects of *Shaw* also look to be more radical than the effects of *Bakke*. Powell's decision left universities free to engage in racial head counting, as long as they are discreet about it. After *Shaw*, by contrast, virtually every minority district in the country is now vulnerable to a constitutional challenge. Last July, federal judges rejected proposals to create minority districts in Ohio and North Carolina, although the shapes proposed were hardly unusual. Ignoring O'Connor's aesthetic theory, they invoked her rhetoric about political apartheid. Another federal judge is now deciding whether a black district in Louisiana, created as a remedy for overt racism by past apportionment plans, can survive *Shaw*.

O'Connor's opinion, in short, threatens to undermine the Voting Rights Act covertly rather than openly, which may be what the conservative justices had in mind. But although her frustration with racial balkanization is understandable, O'Connor is unable to translate the impulse into an intelligible legal principle. In the October 4 cases, the Court will have a second chance. Hispanic voters are challenging Florida's attempt to reapportion its House and Senate seats after the 1990 census. In Dade County, about half of the adult population is Hispanic; and the state legislature proposed to set aside about half (nine out of twenty) of the Dade County House districts for Hispanic majorities. But a Florida judge ruled that even proportional representation is not enough to satisfy the Voting Rights Act. In his view, the Act requires states to create as many safe minority districts as it is possible to create; and there are enough Hispanics in Dade County to make up majorities in two more districts. The U.S. solicitor general, Drew Days, proposes a different reason for creating more districts. In deciding whether Hispanics are proportionately represented in Dade County, he argues, courts should look to the Hispanic population of the state as a whole.

By reversing the decision, and rejecting Days's theory, the justices can re-examine one of the most troubling assumptions of voting rights jurisprudence over the past decade: the assumption that ethnic identity and political identity are always fungible, that all blacks and Hispanics vote alike. It is particularly implausible, as Ruth Bader Ginsburg noted at the oral argument, to suggest that Cuban Republicans in Miami are politically interchangeable with Mexican-American Democrats in Pensacola. By requiring all litigants to prove that minority groups are politically cohesive *throughout* the disputed area, the Court could avoid the balkanizing stereotypes O'Connor rightly deplores.

The American Jewish Committee is asking the justices to take a more dramatic step. Relying on the arguments of Abigail Thernstrom, the AJC maintains that the Voting Rights Act does not require proportional representation at all; it requires that minorities have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Rather than focusing exclusively on whether minority candidates are being elected to office, courts should look to a host of factors—such as whether roads are being built and letters being answered—in deciding whether minorities are shut out of the political process. William Brennan rejected a similar theory in 1986; but the conservatives now have the votes to enact it.

By replacing the cold objectivity of racial head-counting with a more subjective judicial test, the AJC's theory would transform voting rights litigation as radically as *Shaw* has done. But the argument that the Voting Rights Act does not always require racial gerrymandering is more plausible than the argument that the Constitution forbids racial gerrymandering. If Congress wants to make strict racial and ethnic proportionality the measure of fairness in American politics, it should be perfectly free to do so. But first, let it make its intentions clear. •

A true tale from Sarajevo.

LOVE STORY

By Slavenka Drakulić

I have seen their picture in newspapers. It was not clear, obviously taken from a distance: two bodies lying on the Sarajevo ground, two sports bags next to them. Admira is wearing a dark skirt covering the soft curves of her body. Boško is in jeans—what else?—and they both wear sneakers. But one can tell,

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even looking at that blurred photo, that Admira is embracing Boško as they are lying there, dead. This is how it happened: On Wednesday afternoon, May 19, around 4 p.m., they walked along the Miljacka river in no-man's-land, visible to both sides, the Serbian and the Bosnian. Their escape from the besieged city onto the Serbian side was prearranged; both sides had agreed to let them pass. They had to walk about 1,000 yards, but just before the Vrbana bridge—some fifty yards before safety—they fell to the ground, hit by a sudden burst of a sniper's fire.

I can almost hear that distinctive, short, yelping sound in the afternoon air. Boško died immediately, Admira lived long enough to crawl to him and embrace him. There they stayed for almost a week, rotting in the sun (unusually strong this May), the odor of their decaying bodies mixing with that of the young grass.

It is not known who killed them, and maybe it is not even important. There are people on both sides who saw them walking, then falling. Some of them say the fire came from the Serbian side, others claim just the opposite. However, for the next five days the two sides fought for possession of the bodies. On the sixth night, Serbian soldiers resolved the dispute by snatching the bodies.

Boško's mother, who had left Sarajevo a year before and now lived in Belgrade, had given permission for her son to be buried in Sarajevo. Admira's parents said they would prefer to have them buried in Sarajevo in order to attend to their grave, but they also said that the place was of no importance as long as the two were buried together. And finally it happened: the Muslim girl and the Serbian boy who had loved each other for nine years were put in the same coffin and buried in the same grave at the Serbian army graveyard south of Sarajevo.

Their attempt to escape from the war that threatened to destroy their love as well as their very existence had failed—so had their naive belief that love could overcome all obstacles. But I wonder: What did being a Serb or a Muslim mean to them before the breakout of this war? And when exactly did they realize that belonging to one nation or the other might determine their future? Looking at a picture taken after their high school graduation in 1985—both of them handsome, smiling as they hold each other—I can hardly imagine that nationality had any important meaning for these kids, or for any of their peers in ex-Yugoslavia. I am not suggesting that they were not aware of such things. They probably were, as much as anyone else around them. But nationality did not matter much: it could not decide their destiny, or prevent them from falling in love.

They were born in the late 1960s. They watched Spielberg movies; they listened to Iggy Pop; they read John Le Carré; they went to a disco every Saturday night and fantasized about traveling to Paris or London. They had friends in Croatia and Serbia whom they would meet in the summer to go camping somewhere along the Adriatic coast. And then the war broke out, and it was as if someone had opened an old history book: Chetniks against Ustashe, although this time Tito's Partisans were not around. It was the absurd, monstrous war of their grandfathers' stories. And now this war descended on them, crushing a whole generation that had been brought up under the illusion that they belonged to Europe, that they had a better, different future in store.

Boško and Admira decided to save themselves. After all, it was not their war. When Boško's mother asked Admira if this war could separate them, she answered, "No, only bullets could separate us"—as if she knew. This happened only a year ago. The moment Boško decided to stay behind when his mother left for Serbia, Admira and her parents understood it was only love that kept him in Sarajevo. But I imagine that he also decided to stay because neither he nor Admira believed that a war in Bosnia would be possible at all, not really. How could you divide people living on the same floor of an apartment building just because they are of different nationalities? (This is what people from Sarajevo would tell you as late as last spring.) How can you split up a mixed family?

Of course, the power of politics proved stronger than their belief in tolerance and togetherness. After tens of thousands of civilians—their neighbors, friends and relatives—had been killed for no other reason than being of the "wrong" nationality, Boško and Admira realized that they had no chance. The rest of the world had given up on Sarajevo. And while one can perhaps stand lack of electricity and water, even bitter cold and no food, one cannot stand a state of hopelessness for too long. So, when Boško and Admira decided to leave, it made it easier for them to go knowing that the city they once knew did not exist any longer. Perhaps Admira's friends thought she was crazy to leave for Serbia, being a Muslim. What would happen to her once she arrived there? But how could Admira explain to them that in the war she was nothing—only part of a nation, doomed to be "cleansed"? She was confident that Boško and his mother would protect her and that in Belgrade there would be at least a chance for survival.

I can almost see her on that evening of Tuesday, May 18, as she takes out her old Adidas sports bag and begins to pack. "Don't take too many things with you,"—Boško warns, as he leaves the house to make sure everything is ready—"just imagine we are going to visit my mother for a week." But this time Admira lacks imagination. If she would go for a week's visit, she would not take a photo of her parents, her high school diary, her diploma. She would not take her favorite winter dress (not now, it is spring), her golden bracelet and an old rubber doll that brings her luck.

And she would not sit down to write a letter.

When she finishes packing, it is late at night. The city is strangely quiet as if everyone is sound asleep, tired from this endless war. Admira takes a piece of lined

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paper out of her notebook. There is only the dim light of a candle in her room, but her eyes are used to it by now. "Dear mother and father," she writes. Then she pauses. What can she tell them? that she has to go because Sarajevo is not safe for Boško any longer, that he could be drafted by the Bosnian army at any moment? that they could be separated or killed because they are of different nationalities? or that it is only a matter of time before they *will* be killed by shells in the middle of one of Sarajevo's streets, for no reason other than that they live there? Mama and Papa know it all, thinks Admira, as she sits alone in her room. There is nothing to tell them, nothing to explain. They only need to be sure that we managed to escape the death sentence.

Admira sits for a while, then decides to write about her cat. "Please, take care of my cat. He is looking at me and meowing as I am crying and writing this. Sleep with him at least once a month and talk to him all the time." Then she puts out the candle (candles are precious) and goes to bed, staring into the darkness for a while.

The next day it all happened, and this is how I imagine it: On Wednesday afternoon, after briefly hugging her parents, she leaves the house. She must have been very brave not to have shed tears, not to have looked back. As she approaches the river, she can see Boško waiting. It is easy to recognize his tall figure, his nervous gestures. Suddenly she feels that her palms are wet with sweat, but as she rushes to him, she fears no longer. Everything is going to be all right—she thinks—as long as we are together. Then they leave their shelter and get out into the open. They are on the north bank of the river. They do not run. They think there is no need to because they have been guaranteed safe passage. Holding hands, they walk briskly toward the bridge, and all that they hear is the creaking of sand under their feet and the murmur of the river.

The safety zone is not so far away now, and Boško speeds up a little. Slow down please, I can't run, Admira wants to tell him, thinking about how foolish she was to pack so many things in her bag, so many unnecessary things that make it heavy now, too heavy to run. But just as she is about to utter those words, she feels something warm gushing out of her stomach. As she looks down in surprise, she sees that her hands are full of blood. Then pain takes over and she falls on the ground. She can see Boško already lying there motionless, far from her, as if he had been pushed away by some unknown force. "How strange, I heard nothing," she thinks, crawling toward him with the bag in her hand, as if they might still have a chance. But before she sinks into emptiness, she lives long enough to come close to him, to raise her left hand and embrace him.

Boško's mother, Radmila, is the only one from the two families to attend the funeral on May 27 on the barren hilltop south of Sarajevo. Admira's parents don't dare come, although the Serbian forces have guaranteed them safe passage. They can hardly trust guarantees from either side. What should we make, then, of the fact that the two families were never at odds? They tried together to help the young couple escape from what finally became their destiny. On the top of a plain wooden coffin Radmila drapes a pullover she has knitted for Admira. Then she throws a handful of dust into the open grave: "My children, you were blown here by the wind of war," she says. She has no more words, no more tears. I can imagine her there, her feet sinking into a greasy yellow clay. Even if she was not aware of it, her grief had become our grief. Boško and Admira, two young people who represented the future, were driven into the past by a war from which neither generation could save itself.

SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ is the author of *The Balkan Express: Fragments from the Other Side of War* (W. W. Norton).

Sarajevo

Now, when a revolution is really needed, those who were once fervent are cool.

While a country, raped and murdered, calls for help from the Europe it trusted,

While statesmen choose villainy and no voice is raised to call it by its name.

It was a sham, the rebellion of the young who cried for a new earth, and that generation has written the verdict on itself,

Listening with indifference to the cries of those who perish because they are just barbarians killing each other

And the lives of the well-fed are worth more than the lives of the starving.

It is revealed now that their Europe has been, since the beginning, a deception, for its faith and its foundation is nothingness.

Nothingness, as the prophets keep saying, brings forth only nothingness and they will be led once again like cattle to slaughter.

Let them tremble and at the last moment let them comprehend that the word *Sarajevo* from now on will mean the destruction of their sons and the debasement of their daughters.

They have prepared it by repeating "We at least are safe," unaware that what will strike them ripens within them.

CZESLAW MILOSZ
translated by the author and Robert Hass

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The madness of my homeland.

THE SPIDER'S WEB

By Charles Simic

Mistaken ideas always end in bloodshed, but in every case it is someone else's blood. This is why our thinkers feel free to say just about everything.—Albert Camus

In a letter to Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers describes how the philosopher Spinoza used to amuse himself by placing flies in a spider's web, then adding two spiders so he could watch them fight over the flies. "Very strange and difficult to interpret," concludes Jasper. As it turns out, this was the only time the otherwise somber philosopher was known to laugh.

A friend from Yugoslavia called me about a year ago and said: "Charlie, why don't you come home and hate with your own people?" I knew he was pulling my leg, but I was shocked nevertheless. I told him that I was never very good at hating, that I've managed to loathe a few individuals here and there, but have never managed to progress to hating whole peoples.

"In that case," he replied, "you're missing out on the greatest happiness one can have in life."

I'm surprised that there is no History of Stupidity. I envision a work of many volumes, encyclopedic, cumulative, with an index listing millions of names. I only have to think about history for a moment or two before I realize the absolute necessity of such a book. I do not underestimate the influence of religion, nationalism, economics, personal ambition and even chance on events, but the historian who does not admit that men are also fools has not really understood his subject.

Watching Yugoslavia dismember itself, for instance, is like watching a man mutilate himself in public. He has already managed to make himself legless, armless and blind, and now in his frenzy he's struggling to tear his heart out with his teeth. Between bites, he shouts to us that he is a martyr for a holy cause, but we know that he is mad, that he is monstrously stupid.

It required no extraordinary wisdom to predict this tragedy. If our own specialists in ethnic pride in the United States ever start shouting that they can't live with each other, we can expect the same bloodshed to follow. For that reason, what amazed me in the case of Yugoslavia was the readiness with which American intellectuals accepted as legitimate the claim of every nationalist there. The desirability of breaking up into ethnic and religious states a country that had existed since 1918 and that had complicated internal and outside agreements was welcomed with unreserved enthusiasm by everybody from *The New York Times* to the German government. It probably takes much longer to get a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise than it took to convince the world that Yugoslavia should be replaced by as many little states as the natives desire.

What are you? Americans ask me. I explain that I was born in Belgrade, that I left when I was 15, that we always thought of ourselves as Yugoslavs, that for the last thirty years I have been translating Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian and Macedonian poets into English, that whatever differences I found among these people delighted me and that I couldn't care less about any of these nationalist leaders and their programs.

"Oh, so you're a Serb!" they exclaim triumphantly.

Over the last forty years I've known Russians, Yugoslavs, Hungarians, Poles, Argentinians, Chinese, Iranians and a dozen other nationalities, all refugees from murderous regimes. The only people of honor on the whole planet. This summer in Paris and Amsterdam I met more "traitors," men and women who refused to identify themselves with various nationalist groups in Yugoslavia. They wanted to remain free of tribal pieties and that was their heresy. They are the other orphans of that civil war. (Five of us were sitting in the Brasserie Cluny in Paris writing a protest letter to Milošević and arguing about the wording when one member of our group remembered that Tito had conducted his illegal business for the Comintern in the same brasserie before the war. Does this crap ever end? someone wondered aloud.)

The destruction of Vukovar and Sarajevo will not be forgiven the Serbs. Whatever moral credit they had as the result of their history they squandered by these two acts. The suicidal and abysmal idiocy of nationalism is revealed here better than anywhere else. No human being or group of people has the right to pass a death sentence on a city. "Defend your own, but respect what others have," my grandfather used to say, and he was a highly decorated officer in the First World War and certainly a Serbian patriot. I imagine he would have agreed with me. There will be no happy future for people who have made the innocent suffer.

Here is something we can all count on. Sooner or later our tribe always comes to ask us to agree to murder.

"In the hour of need you walked away from your own people," a fellow I know said to me when I turned down the invitation. True. I refused to turn my conscience over to the leader of the pack. I continued stubbornly to believe in more than one truth. Only the individual is real, I kept saying over and over again. I praised the outcast, the pariah, while my people were offering me an opportunity to become a part of a mystic whole. I insisted on remaining aloof, self-absorbed, lovingly nursing my suspicions.

"For whom does your poetry speak when you have no tribe anywhere you can call your own?" my interlocutor wanted to know.

"The true poet is never a member of any tribe," I shouted back. "It is his refusal of his birthright that

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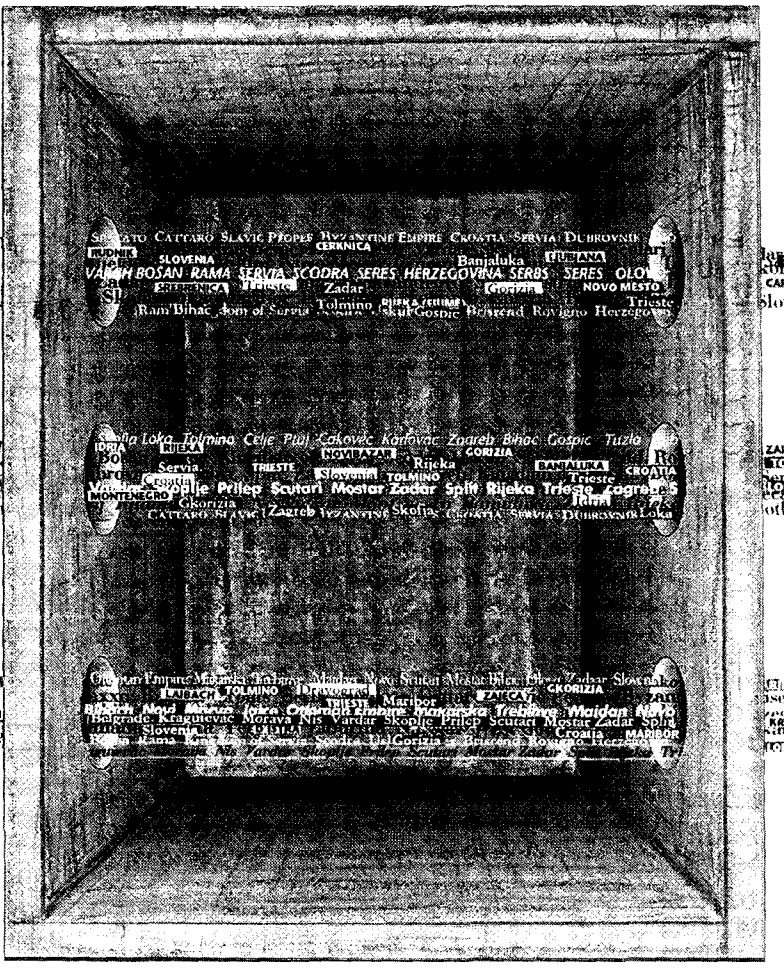
makes him a poet and an individual worth respecting," I explained.

This wasn't true, of course. Many of the greatest poets in the history of the world have been fierce nationalists. The sole function of the epic poet is to find excuses for the butcheries of the innocent. In our big and comfy family bed today's murderers will sleep like little babies is what they are always saying.

On the other side are the poets who trust only the solitary human voice. The lyric poet is almost by definition a traitor to his own people. He is the stranger who speaks that harsh truth that only individual lives are unique and therefore sacred. He may be loved by his people, but his example is also the one to be warned against. The tribe must pull together to face the invading enemy while the lyric poet sits talking to the skull in the graveyard. For that reason he deserves to be exiled, put to death and remembered.



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The terrifying thing about modern intellectuals everywhere is that they are always changing idols. At least religious fanatics stick mostly to what they believe in. All the rabid nationalists in Eastern Europe were Marxists yesterday and Stalinists last week. The freedom of the individual has never been their concern. They were after bigger fish. The sufferings of the world are an ideal chance for all intellectuals to have an experience of tragedy and to fulfill their utopian longings. If, in the meantime, one comes to share the views of some mass murderer, the ends justify the means. Modern tyrants have had some of the most illustrious literary salons.

Nationalism, as much as communism, provides an opportunity to rewrite history. The problem with true history and great literature is that they wallow in ambiguities, unresolved issues, nuances and baffling contradictions. Let's not kid ourselves, the Manichean view of the world is much more satisfying. Any revision of history is acceptable provided it gives us some version of the struggle between angels and devils. If, in reality, this means dividing murderers in Yugoslavia into good and bad, so be it. If it means weeping from one eye at the death of a Muslim woman and winking from the other at the death of her Orthodox husband, that's the secret attraction of simple plots.

American media, too, treat complexity the way Victorians treated sexuality—as something from which the viewer and the reader need to be protected. In the case of Yugoslavia, where nothing is simple, the consequences are more evil. Our columnists and intellectuals often have views identical to those of their nationalist counterparts in various regions of that country. It's as if in an age of P.C., they miss having someone to hate. The democratic forces in Yugoslavia can expect nothing from our side. At home they'll be treated as traitors, and abroad their version of events will be greeted with silence for making the plot too complicated.

So what's to be done? people rightly ask. I've no idea. As an elegist I mourn and expect the worst. Vileness and stupidity always have a rosy future. The world is still a few evils short, but they'll come. Dark despair is the only healthy outlook if you identify yourself with the flies, as I do. If, however, you secretly think of yourself as one of the spiders, or, God forbid, as the laughing philosopher himself, you have much less to worry about. Since you'll be on the winning side, you can always rewrite history and claim you were flies. Elegies in a spider's web is all we bona fide flies get. That and the beauty of sunrise, like some unexpected touch of the executioner's final courtesy the day they take us out to be slaughtered. In the meantime, my hope is very modest. Let's have a true cease-fire for once, so the old lady can walk out into the rubble and find her cat.

CHARLES SIMIC, winner of the 1990 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, is author of *Hotel Insomnia* (Harcourt Brace).

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Franjo Tudjman's brutal opportunism.

CROATIANISM

By Ivo Banac

Croatia is the forgotten battleground of former Yugoslavia. The recent horrors in Bosnia have erased the memory of 1991, when Vukovar and Dubrovnik flickered on the complacent screen of Western attention. The European Community's recognition of Croatia in January 1992 and the first Vance-Owen plan were supposed to provide for the honorable exit of the Yugoslav People's Army from Krajina, the name Serbia imposed on the part of Croatia it occupied. Instead, the United Nations "peacekeepers" who entered the region failed to disarm the Serbs and merely stood by as they forced Croat villagers out of the area.

Croatia's awkward and ill-timed attempts to combat Serbian occupation, as in its halfhearted military action against the Serbs in Maslenica and Peruča last winter, exposed the government in Zagreb to Western condemnation. Most Western governments criticized Croatia's actions; a U.N. Security Council resolution called on Croatia to withdraw. The semiofficial Croatian view was that the West was punishing Croatia for its part in the Yugoslav meltdown. Perhaps—scapegoating and hypocrisy are indeed convertible currency in the current Balkan conflict. But a surer explanation for Western attitudes toward Croatia is to be found in the self-defeating policies of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman. His attempts to identify Croatia with himself have succeeded beyond his wildest imagination, but mainly to the detriment of his country.

Imagination is a creative faculty that Tudjman sorely lacks. He came to power in April 1990 on the wings of Croat revolt against Slobodan Milošević's nationalist provocations, having successfully tapped the powerful vein of Croat disenchantment with communism and Yugoslavia that had been silently mounting since at least 1971. From the beginning his administration was autocratic (the constitution of 1990 gave him virtual control over the government and the parliament) and his strategy compromising. Tudjman was convinced that a grand Croato-Serb agreement was possible; that Milošević would let Croatia go its own merry way if only Tudjman did not obstruct him elsewhere, notably in Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro, and if a deal could be struck to divide Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia. It is not difficult to see how Milošević, who outmatched Tudjman both in cunning and in cannon, and beat him hands down in autocracy and inconsistency, easily took the Croatian for a ride.

Milošević never would have done so much damage had the Croatian leadership pursued a different strategy. But instead of seeking allies to protect his country, Tudjman committed three glaring mistakes. First, to get the backing of the Serbian leader, Tudjman sought to distance himself from any entanglements with an anti-Milošević coalition. The hopes of Kosovar Albanians, Montenegrins and various minorities—such as the Bosnian Muslim minority in the Sandžak region of Serbia—were quickly disappointed by Tudjman's attentiveness to Serbia's appetites. Second, despite his resolute rhetoric, Tudjman did little to prepare Croatia for the onslaught of the Yugoslav People's Army. Tudjman spoke loudly but carried a toothpick. Third, and most disastrous, he covertly plotted with Serbia to divide Bosnia.

The common thread in Tudjman's compendium of errors was a naive belief that Milošević could be appeased. To be sure, the Serbian leader had backed down at various times. His original goal in 1987 was to assume the leadership of all of Yugoslavia and recentralize the country by overthrowing Tito's federal constitution. Later, in 1990, he abandoned the idea of holding on to Slovenia. Still later, in 1992, he reconciled himself to the possibility of a feeble Croatia (without the Serb-occupied territories) and a softened Macedonia. Most recently, he has given up the idea of keeping all of Bosnia.

But Tudjman was wrong to interpret these moves as conciliatory gestures. In fact, Milošević's retreats only reinforced his claim to an expanded Serbian state. Each was forced upon him by the stiff resistance of the Slovenes, Croats, Macedonians and Bosnian Muslims. Thus, it is entirely unrealistic to assume, as Tudjman evidently does, that Milošević will agree to a withdrawal from Croatia in exchange for Croatia's acceptance of Milošević's land grabs in Bosnia. Milošević's aims are promoted every time his goal of creating an ethnically pure Serbian state is mistaken for ideologically neutral horse trading.

Tudjman played into Milošević's hands in another way. The international community recognized the brutality of Serbian aggression in Bosnia, but its outrage was greater than its willingness to intervene on Bosnia's behalf. Hence the various schemes, à la Vance-Owen and Owen-Stoltenberg, which created an appearance of fairness, but in actuality strengthened Milošević's attempts to legitimate the notion of Bosnia's divisibility and Serbia's right to hold on to its conquests. None of these schemes would have worked had Croatia stood by the Bosnian government. Instead, Tudjman promoted the division of Bosnia since at least 1990, and in 1992 set up his own para-state of Herceg-Bosna, which made Milošević's job all the easier.

The irony of the situation is that more than two-thirds of Bosnia's Croats live outside so-called Herceg-Bosna. The horror is that Tudjman was willing to sacri-

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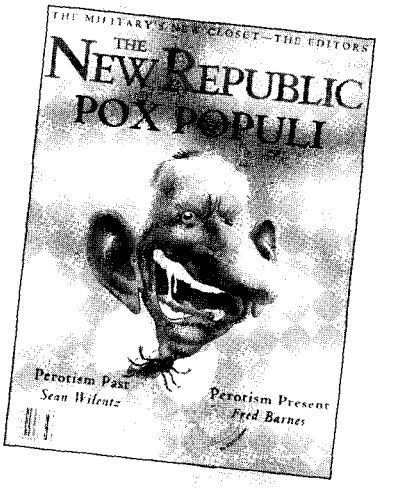

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fice them; indeed, he still expects them to withdraw from their ancient homesteads in central Bosnia, in order to solidify his deal with Milošević and its international legitimation through the Owen-Stoltenberg scheme. None of this could have been accomplished if Tudjman hadn't manufactured bogus accusations against the Muslims, or promoted brutalities against them, thereby damaging long-standing Croat-Muslim cooperation. And when the Muslims picked up arms against the Croats, committing their own brutalities, the circle was completed. The victims of Milošević's aggression ended up adopting his patterns of behavior. The international community thus found a further excuse for inactivity. And Milošević won a backhanded exoneration as just one of many iniquitous misleaders.

He won another advantage. If Bosnia could be divided with Western acquiescence, what could prevent the division of Croatia and the acceptance of Milošević's para-state of Krajina? The Croat public has been sold on the provisional status of U.N.-protected areas—on the idea that the U.N. soon will restore Croatia's sovereignty to the country's Serb-occupied inner rim. This seems most unlikely in light of what happened in Bosnia with Tudjman's active help. Tudjman still seems oblivious to the fact that he fell into Milošević's trap. His shortsightedness defies rational explanation.

Incredulous outside observers need to be reminded, however, that Tudjman has been running a Katzenjammer Kids administration. After three and a half years of power he is into his seventh foreign minister. The unwholesome camarilla atmosphere that pervades Zagreb's councils of power, and reinforces Tudjman's isolation, is strictly the result of his solipsistic style of governance. No criticism is welcome. Hence the firm control over the electronic media and much of the daily press.

Western responsibility for this course of events is large indeed. Not only was Tudjman encouraged by the abandonment of Bosnia (and, indeed, Croatia) to seek his own escape routes from the Serbian pincer grip, but the West's downplaying of Croatia's legitimate defense in 1991 created the opening for Tudjman's anti-Western insinuations. The current wisdom in Zagreb is that the morally vacuous West has no right to preach to Croatia.

The Croat opposition has found it very difficult to counter this position, which feeds on isolation and disenchantment. Nevertheless, according to current opinion polls, the opposition parties, notably the Social-Liberal Party, the Peasant Party, the centrist National Party and the rightist Party of (State) Right, jointly command the allegiance of nearly half the electorate, whereas Tudjman's Democratic Union currently has the support of less than a quarter of Croatian voters. Moreover, dissension is growing in Tudjman's own party, whose moderate wing is sidestepping him to focus on the party's extreme nationalists, many of whom are encouraging nostalgia for Croatia's fascist World War II regime.

Despite all of these developments, which alone are a measure of Tudjman's failure, and which are exacerbated by a terrible economy and by stories of corruption and abuse of power, Tudjman has not been forthrightly challenged. Except for a joint Croat-Muslim rally in Zagreb in July, and a promise of sharp actions by the trade unions this fall, his policies have only come under mild attack from the press and from within parliament. That may be changing. Although the opposition feels no strong encouragement from the West, its own sense of imminent danger as well as Croatia's isolation is directing it toward a more forward stance. Several oppositional parties have already denounced Tudjman's Bosnia policy, including the official proclamation of the para-state Herceg-Bosna on August 24.

The opposition's frustration with the Democratic Union's steamroller methods in the parliament might lead to a walkout, which would challenge Tudjman's claims to lead a model democracy but not necessarily force a change of course. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church is also tilting against Tudjman's Bosnian policies. The archbishop of Sarajevo is on record as opposing the ethnic cleansing of Croats from central Bosnia and as favoring the coexistence with all nationalities of Bosnia.

A sharp turn in Croatia's policy toward Bosnia-Herzegovina and its own rapid internal democratization would have tremendous consequences for the resolution of the Bosnian crisis and the broader Balkan conflict. A responsible Croatia that repudiates all territorial ambitions in Bosnia but is strongly in favor of democratic rights for all national groups would find a common language with the Bosnian Muslims. Moreover, on that basis, it could find a common cause with the non-irredentist Serbs and attract them to a nationally pluralist vision of Croatia's future. Together, Croatia and Bosnia could defeat Milošević's Bosnian surrogates. Milošević would be weakened as a result, and less capable of challenging the world community.

Such a change in Croatia is not unrealistic. What is necessary is for a coalition of moderate parties, including the liberal wing of the Democratic Union aided by the church and the liberal intelligentsia, to come forward with a program for a transitional government of peace and reconciliation. Despite the obstacles and great devastation of the war, Croatia might yet follow the path of Slovenia, which, though hardly an ideal country, is as normal and conservative as Poland or Hungary. Much depends on Western engagement in favor of Croatia's democratic forces. It must be demonstrated that they offer the only pathway to success—away from war and stagnation. Croatia could hold a key to peace in Bosnia.

IVO BANAC is professor of history and master of Pierson College at Yale University.

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SEE NO EVIL

By Patrick Glynn

The behind-the-scenes story of the creation of American policy on Bosnia, which is only now emerging—thanks partly to the angry resignations of so many officials involved—calls into serious question the ability of the United States to cope with the complex problems of the post-cold war era. It also calls into question the morality of American foreign policy. At a time when a museum to Holocaust victims was opening in Washington to great fanfare, history will record that two administrations refrained, in the face of overwhelming evidence, from countering a blatant program of genocide in Bosnia whose scope and nature they fully understood.

Most Americans assume that the United States was surprised by the war in the Balkans. On the contrary, at every stage American officials understood what was taking place in the disintegrating Yugoslavia. In 1990 the Central Intelligence Agency correctly predicted the violent breakup of the country; at the beginning of 1992 it foresaw the spread of the war to Bosnia. The failures of U.S. policy in Yugoslavia lay not in a lack of intelligence or even in the absence of feasible options, but rather in a conscious decision by high officials to avoid involvement.

Indeed, interviews with current and former officials involved in the Bosnian situation, some of whom spoke on the record and others of whom insisted on anonymity, suggest that the Bush and Clinton administrations deliberately distorted the picture of events in order to defuse public pressure for American involvement. The pattern of behavior is oddly reminiscent of the policy surrounding the prosecution of the Vietnam war: in Vietnam, the government concealed bad news to blunt public outcry against the war; in Bosnia, the government manipulated information to stem popular support for intervention.

Government officials knew that the central problem in Yugoslavia was aggressive Serbian nationalism—despite frequent public statements suggesting that all sides were somehow equally to blame. In the fall of 1990, the CIA prepared a national intelligence estimate predicting the potentially violent breakup of the country as early as mid-1991. The estimate, whose basic contents were reported in *The New York Times*, laid the primary blame on Serbian president Slobodan Milošević (an assessment with which then-Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger publicly agreed).

The United States was by no means oblivious to problems in Croatia, where Franjo Tudjman's nationalist ruling party had alienated and frightened the Serbian minority; the government was equally aware of the growing secessionist feeling in the republic of Slovenia. But State Department officials in 1991 regarded the Slovenian, Croatian, Macedonian and Bosnian leaders as at least nascently democratic and pro-Western in orientation. It was, as American officials well understood, the still-Communist regime in Serbia that was repressive and prone to violence.

"It was no big secret in the State Department or the [Central Intelligence] Agency that the Serbs were responsible and were going where they were going," says Georgè Kenney, who resigned in protest as acting head of the State Department's Yugoslavia section last year. "We knew perfectly well what was going on over there. CIA and INR [the State Department's intelligence bureau] knew exactly what was going on." Other officials involved in policy-making at the time confirm Kenney's view.

Ironically, numerous public statements by the Bush administration accurately reflected this understanding of the war. But such clear-headed official statements of Serbian responsibility were inevitably followed by conspicuous silences or off-the-cuff remarks designed to muddy the waters, spread the blame and reduce pressures for decisive U.S. action. For example, as early as September 25, 1991—three months after the outbreak of the Yugoslav war—Secretary of State James Baker scathingly criticized Serbia before the U.N. Security Council, stating that "the Serbian leadership" and "the Yugoslav military" were "working in tandem" to "create a 'small Yugoslavia' or 'greater Serbia.'" Baker went on to deplore such "repression" and "use of force." But afterward, according to one former official who spoke on the condition of anonymity, "Baker clammed up for three months." "There was a general understanding in the [State] Department that the secretary was uncomfortable with what he had said" and had gotten "way out ahead" on Yugoslavia policy, he says.

Repeatedly, according to officials who participated in the policy, the Bush administration found that an honest portrayal of events in warring Yugoslavia created

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BOEING

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political pressure for American action. As a result, in the words of the same former official, it inevitably sought to "tamp down" the impression it had created through such forthright statements. This explained what the former official calls the "toing and froing" of the Bush rhetoric on Yugoslavia, sometimes citing Serbian aggression, at other times depicting the struggle as the product of age-old ethnic tensions or "civil war."

No one was more effective in complicating the picture of the struggle than Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger, a former U.S. ambassador to Belgrade, who played a central role as both policy-maker and public spokesman on the issue. Appearing on "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" in April 1992, as war was beginning in Bosnia, Eagleburger acknowledged that the Serbs were the "principal culprit," but argued that they were "not the only culprit by any means." He portrayed the war as one in which the sides were not yet "tired of killing one another," and reminded viewers of the "very close historical relationship" between America and Serbia, which dated from World War II, when the two countries were "allies."

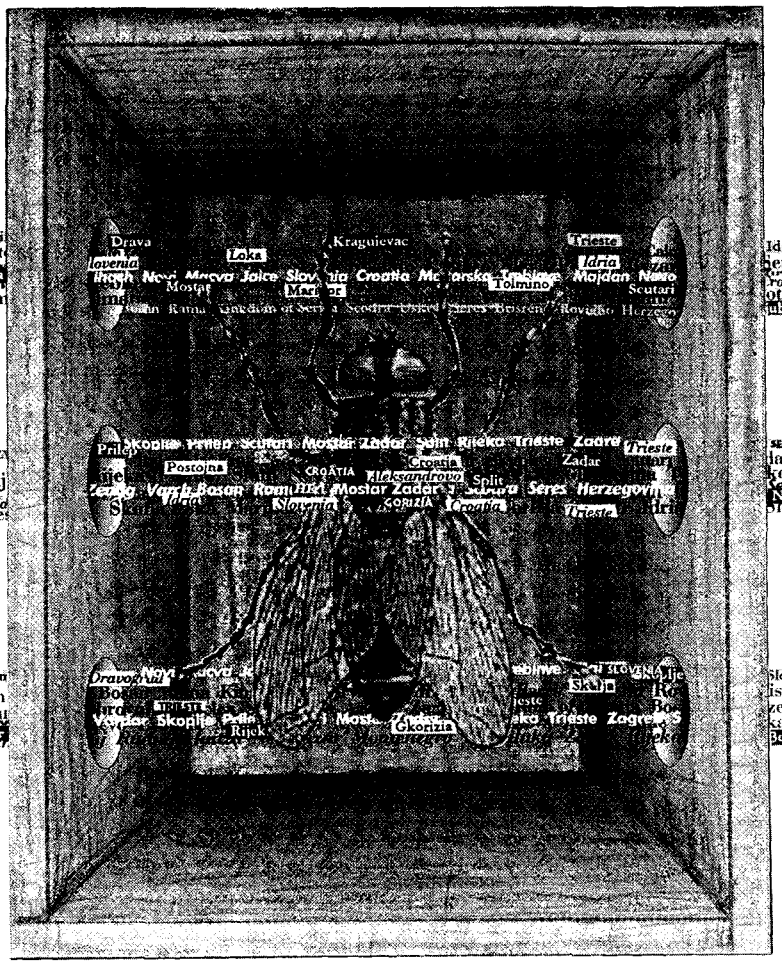

ILLUSTRATION BY CARLOS REYNOSO FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

According to several present and former officials, Eagleburger's assessment of blame was calculatedly ambiguous—and clearly at variance with what the State Department and intelligence agencies knew at the time. "It was cynical, disingenuous, whatever you want to call it," says Marshall Freeman Harris, who resigned in protest three months ago as the State Department's Bosnia desk officer. The purpose, he and others say, was to counter growing pressure, stemming from media reports of the war, for decisive U.S. action.

Yet nowhere was the pattern of distortion clearer than on the issue of the Serbian concentration camps. According to several former officials, State Department officers knew of the existence of Serbian detention centers for Bosnian Muslims as early as April and May of 1992; by the end of June, they knew of full-fledged concentration camps. Yet it was not until August 3, after *Newsday*'s Roy Gutman revealed the camps and their cruelties in stories written from Bosnia, that a State Department spokesman acknowledged their existence. And even then, Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Niles went to Capitol Hill the next day to testify that evidence concerning the camps was inconclusive. By the fall of 1992, according to several former officials, the State Department had enough evidence to produce a legal finding of "genocide" against Serbia—but such charges were blocked, for fear the United States would be required to intervene under the 1951 Genocide Convention.

All the while, a struggle persisted within the State Department: working-level officials tried to make public the appalling information on Serbian atrocities; mid-level officials thwarted their attempts in an effort to keep in place the Bush policy of nonintervention. The information flow was even blocked internally. Kenney says that a "Night Note" he composed on Serbian concentration camps for President Bush's reading was altered by Eagleburger's office to make it appear, incorrectly, that all three sides were *equally* engaged in operating camps. (Croat and Muslim fighters were known to have carried out atrocities, but on nowhere near the vast scale of the Serb forces.) Other former officials cite a similar pattern of evasion and distortion.

Also, throughout 1992, when Eagleburger was publicly encouraging hopes for American businessman-turned-Yugoslav-prime minister Milan Panic to end the war, intelligence agencies and State Department officials all but unanimously came to the conclusion that Panic would simply be used by Milošević and would have no appreciable impact on Serbian policy. During the whole Panic episode—nearly six months—the chance for more decisive American action was put on hold.

The same conflict was replicated in the U.S. embassy in Belgrade, where Ambassador Warren Zimmerman, in ac-

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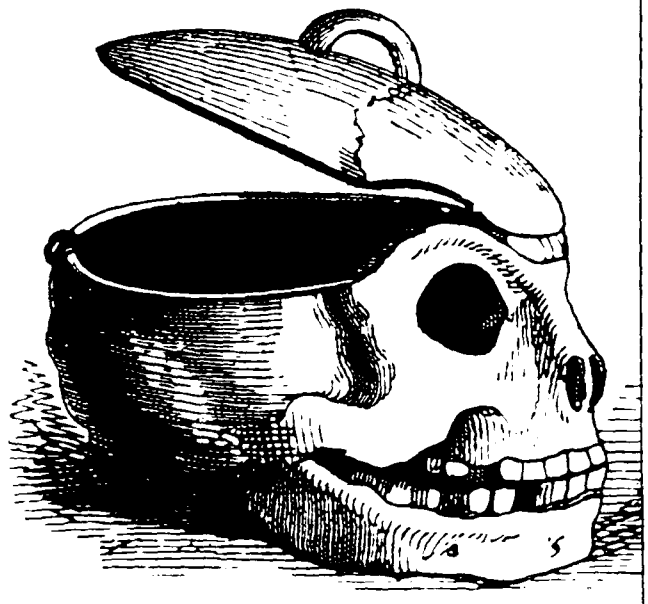
How to Be Religious & Not Commit Intellectual Suicide



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Speak no evil

On September 8, at a five-minute press conference with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, President Clinton mentioned four times that he would seek the support of Congress before intervening in the Balkan conflict. It was a triumphant moment for lawmakers. After years in which the executive branch virtually ignored congressional authority in foreign affairs—Grenada, Panama, Nicaragua—Congress (especially Democrats) was finally getting a chance to have its say. "With a president who is new in foreign affairs and a secretary of state who is cautious," said Paul Simon, a ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations committee, "Congress must fill the vacuum."

Unfortunately, Congress has managed only to create a vacuum of its own. The hawkish wing of the Democratic party, which tilted toward interventionism in the mid-1980s, has followed President Clinton into a policy of detachment. With few exceptions, the Democrats who complained about the need for congressional oversight during the Reagan years have fallen in line behind Clinton. Meanwhile, many Reagan Doctrine Republicans have become loud obstructionists, challenging the president's authority to act without their consent.

During the Gulf war, several ranking Democrats on the House Foreign Affairs Committee touted their support of intervention as the end of Democratic spinelessness: "A Democratic message is taking form," said Representative Robert Torricelli, an early supporter of the war, in March 1991. "Some people are not convinced of our ability to adequately wield power, but we represent an activist foreign policy." One year later he sent a letter to George Bush urging force if Saddam Hussein did not comply with a U.N. mandate to destroy weapons. Another hawk, Tom Lantos, went to great lengths to ensure involvement in the Gulf. As co-chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus in October 1990, he arranged for the infamous testimony of the Kuwaiti ambassador's 15-year-old daughter, who claimed (falsely) that Iraqi soldiers removed twenty-two Kuwaiti babies from incubators and "left them on the cold hospital floors to die."

Now, however, Torricelli and Lantos are in the forefront of the movement to revive the Vietnam Syndrome. In late April, just when the administration was shying away from engagement, Torricelli told *The Washington Post*: "The Vietnam example has been misapplied so many times that when you finally get to the real thing, people don't recognize it. In Bosnia we have probably found the real thing." At a May 18 hearing with Christopher before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Hungarian-born Lantos, who fought in the anti-Nazi underground, could barely contain his enthusiasm for the administration's "outstanding" Bosnia policy: "You have shown leadership, and the Europeans have chosen not to accept this leadership thus far. That is fine.... They can handle this problem themselves."

With the hawks turned chicken, leadership has reverted to the neo-isolationists in the party, those who in the 1980s were more opposed to executive overreach than to intervention. Lee Hamilton, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and head of the congressional committee that investigated Iran-contra, built his reputation by expressing outrage that Reagan was not taking Congress seriously. Daniel Patrick Moynihan boomed against the president's abuse of power in the Gulf war debate, claiming that Bush was "secretly moving to create an ongoing, permanent Orwellian crisis."

But now that a Democrat is in power they have managed to blast passivity while staying loyal to the administration. "Bosnia is drifting toward catastrophe," Hamilton wrote in July. "The U.S. and the international community cannot stand by and watch."

Yet he has practically been the administration's spokesman while it has done just that. In late April, when the administration failed to win the allies' approval for a lift and strike policy, Hamilton wrote an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* titled "Air Strikes? Not Yet." He then changed his mind in late July when the president announced that the United States would participate in a NATO air support operation to protect U.N. troops. In early May he even pledged support for the president's policy when there wasn't one: "I do not know what steps the president has in mind—military steps," he told National Public Radio. "But my view is, in the end, the Congress would support it."

Moynihan's policy is a more rhapsodic version of Hamilton's. On "Meet the Press" in May, he described the "graves—the soccer fields being dug for the graves of 6-year-old children. We used to say never forget, never again." However, when Tim Russert asked if the president had made a mistake by not intervening, the senator ducked. "The world that has watched has committed a grave sin," he answered.

Meanwhile, Republican hawks who used to cringe at the mention of the War Powers Act have suddenly become strict constructionists. "Where under the Constitution does Bill Clinton get the right to take us into war against Serbia if the Congress of the United States does not authorize him to go to war?" Pat Buchanan fumed on "Crossfire" in April. This is the same man who, in a July 1987 op-ed about the contras, advised Reagan to "find the supplies, ship them openly and challenge the Congress to impeach him. They don't have the cojones." Senators John McCain and John Warner, both members of the Armed Services Committee and avid hawks under Republican administrations, have suddenly become vocal anti-interventionists and fans of the War Powers Act.

Of course, there are those on both sides of the aisle who have never deviated in their support for air strikes. Joseph Biden, chairman of the European Affairs subcommittee, and Frank McCloskey, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, both former doves, have been the administration's harshest critics. But even they have done a 180-degree turn on the War Powers Act. During the Gulf war debate, Biden, for example, called Congress's war powers "a key principle of the republic." In May, however, the senator led the effort to pass a resolution allowing the president to override provisions of the act; in July he urged Clinton to ignore public opinion and congressional resistance.

While votes haven't been cast yet, the president's latest proposal to send troops as part of a peacekeeping mission seems doomed. Hawks oppose it because it legitimizes Serbian aggression, and doves shy away from involving American soldiers in what they see as a civil war. Not a single senator supported the plan in private sessions with the president, according to Senator Dennis DeConcini. Meanwhile, Representative Benjamin Gilman left with the impression that administration officials did not try very hard, giving a "sober" presentation about the risks of involvement. Finally, it seems, Clinton has found a good use for gridlock.

HANNA ROSIN

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cord with the dominant policy line, put the best face on Milošević's susceptibility to mere diplomatic pressures even while analysts in his embassy consistently argued that the Serbian leader would only respond to force.

Amid the many shifts in public posture, the one constant in the Bush policy was the objective of avoiding involvement. This taboo on military action colored the whole intragovernmental process. Kenney and other former State Department officials tell of an utter absence of overall strategic discussion of the Balkans and a debilitating lack of communication between analysts familiar with the situation and top officials. For example, when recognition of Bosnia was under consideration in early 1992, the CIA predicted that such a move could trigger war—at least in the absence of some larger effort at containing or deterring the aggressive Serbs. Nonetheless, top policymakers proceeded with recognition despite the CIA warnings.

Intelligence agencies, which provided excellent interpretation of political trends, offered characteristically cautious assessments of possible action. These appraisals—based on sparse information about the military situation, particularly the composition and morale of Serbian forces—were readily accepted by leaders eager to find reasons for inaction. For example, in the fall of 1992, when pressure was building to lift the arms embargo on Bosnian government forces, intelligence suggested that training lead-times (in many cases, of four to five weeks) would make arms supplies to the Bosnians ineffective—even though the war was to continue for nearly a year.

Clearly, decisive action involved political risks—especially for an unpopular president in an election year. But this was not the same as saying options were unavailable. It is worth remembering that, during the 1980s, the fateful decision to arm Afghan resistance fighters with Stinger missiles—ultimately leading to the USSR's defeat in Afghanistan—involved overcoming powerful bureaucratic resistance in both the Defense Department and the CIA. "A lot of things are doable when there's a commitment to it," says one unhappy former State Department official, reflecting on the pattern of inaction. "There was never anybody who sat down and said what would it take."

Notably, some high-level civilian officials in the Bush Pentagon, including Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Assistant Undersecretary Zalmay Khalilzad, a participant in the successful Afghanistan policy under Reagan, repeatedly pushed in interagency meetings for lifting the arms embargo on Bosnian government forces during 1992. They pointed not only to the Afghan success but to the example of the war in Croatia, where gradual acquisition of illegal arms by the Croatian army had produced a military stalemate, and ultimately an enduring cease-fire, between Croat and Serb forces in December and January of 1991 and 1992. Top-level State and NSC officials opposed lifting the embargo on the simple grounds that more arms would prolong the war in Bosnia. The aversion to risk and the resistance to action were overwhelming, former officials say.

Interestingly, after the election, Bush himself experienced a change of heart and sent Eagleburger to Europe to argue for lifting the embargo. But Eagleburger, whose strong personal opposition to lifting the embargo was well-known, gave a deliberately unenthusiastic rendition of the president's message, according to a former official familiar with the discussions. Faced with such mixed signals, European governments had little incentive to endorse a change in policy.

Despite heady campaign rhetoric on Bosnia, the Clinton administration has essentially repeated the Bush pattern of inaction and obfuscation—only in a more obvious, embarrassing and potentially destructive fashion. The administration's overall review of options on Bosnia produced similarly cautious briefs from intelligence agencies, which argued that arming the Bosnians would make for a bloodier war and warned that air strikes might embolden Albanians to revolt in Kosovo. Officials say President Clinton early on was persuaded of the risks of action. Nonetheless, unwilling to admit that it was washing its hands of Bosnia, the administration has combined bold declarations about American "strategic interests" there with weak initiatives guaranteed to produce no results, while at the same time damaging U.S. prestige and credibility. In May 1993 Christopher traveled to Europe to offer a decidedly—some speculate deliberately—unenthusiastic case for Clinton's proposed "lift and strike" option (combining an end to the arms embargo against Bosnia with air strikes against Serb forces). Since then, the administration has taken to arguing that the president wished to act in Bosnia but was prevented by the allies.

Lately, the administration has begun to engage in its own all-too-transparent brand of revisionism. Lacking the subtlety shown by Eagleburger, Secretary of State Christopher's clumsy efforts to distribute blame for the war equally ("there are atrocities on all sides") provoked an angry memo from a State Department analyst, leaked to *The New York Times*, pointing out the blatant inaccuracy of the secretary's assessment. More recently, administration officials have taken to arguing disingenuously that we should "respect" the surrender that the Bosnians have "freely" accepted—despite the fact that the Owen-Stoltenberg partition plan is plainly being imposed on the Bosnian government, not least by behind-the-scenes pressure from Washington. Indeed, the decision of the Clinton administration to begin pressing the Bosnian government to accept surrender and partition precipitated the final spate of resignations by Harris and two other officials at State.

The Bush administration succeeded in distancing itself from the Bosnian debacle, at least for a time. Having condemned the Bush policy on moral grounds, the Clinton administration is now in the position of quietly sponsoring Bosnia's surrender to aggression. No wonder nobody wants to admit it.

PATRICK GLYNN is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

In the Soup

Nine of Raymond Carver's stories and one of his poems are *not* transferred to the screen in **Short Cuts** (Fine Line). Robert Altman, who directed and co-wrote the screenplay with Frank Barhydt, is quite explicit about that. Altman says, "I look at all of Carver's work as just one story, for his stories are all occurrences, all about things that just happen to people and cause their lives to take a turn." This was not an offhand remark: it's in his introduction to a special edition of those stories and that poem. Licensed by this odd view—on the same ground, all of Dickens's novels are just one novel, etc., etc.—he has boiled the original material into what he calls elsewhere "Carver soup."

But he doesn't serve it. With little more than a Carver aroma in the air, he serves up his own 189-minute offering. This offering—let's put food metaphors aside—is structured much like *Nashville* (1975). Set in Los Angeles, *Short Cuts* tells nine stories involving twenty-three people and presents them in intermingled form. Before very long, we're aware that we're meant to be impressed more by the dexterous mingling than by the stories themselves. The fates of most of these characters seem of less concern to Altman than his cinematic virtuosity. In some ways he certainly displays this virtuosity, but over the whole (intended) dazzle looms the figure of Altman the Devourer.

Carver admirers will recognize the antecedents of the film's narratives. A couple order a birthday cake for their small son who is then killed by a car ("A Small, Good Thing"); a man goes on a fishing trip with some pals and later reports to his wife that a woman's body was in the water upstream the whole time ("So Much Water Close to Home"); a man takes out the pesty family dog and deliberately loses it ("Jerry and Molly and Sam"): these are some of them. All of them have been altered—not, alas, beyond recognition: just to the point where they are still recognizable. One of the film stories—about a fading jazz club singer and her sensitive cellist daughter—is original, contrived by Altman and Barhydt in their idea of the Carver mode.

But there's no point in indicting Altman for changing Carver: he has already pleaded both guilty and not guilty, the latter because he made the changes in aid of his own art. Well, how far has he aided his art? Let's note at once that some moments in *Short Cuts* strike home. The scene between the parents of the dead boy and the baker of the birthday cake is quietly moving, as the irritated baker learns why the cake was not picked up. Bonds between the two married sisters—in which, without saying much, they laugh together about some sexual matters—have insight and charm. A reconciliation between a bullied hash-house waitress and her boozy husband is an oasis in the midst of grunge.

Some of the filmic devices spin the several narratives along. At the start, for instance, helicopters fly over nighttime L.A. and environs, spraying insecticide against the medfly. The film cuts from the 'copters to the beginning of Story A, then back to the 'copters, then to the beginning of Story B, then back to the 'copters and so on, as the spraying itself evokes reactions from the residents of each story and helps to get them going. (No matter that the device is a reminder of the opening of *La Dolce Vita*: Altman invisibly tips his hat to Fellini with thanks for the assist.) Throughout the film, its parts click into place.

Still, the clicks sometimes obtrude. Just after the fisherman-husband tells his wife that the woman in the stream was dead, we cut to the young mother of the just-expired boy. Sometimes the Altman of *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* shows his italicizing hand: when two unhappy couples settle down for a drunken barbecue and game-playing, we get a close-up of the game they will play—a box marked Jeopardy. When the dead boy's grandfather leaves the hospital, he walks past an attendant who is—so significantly—mopping up. And for all his deftness, Altman sometimes seems foxed by the wide screen he's using. That's when we get immense close-ups, plunked right in the center—utter visual banality.

And after the film traverses its three hours and ten minutes, what *is* it? Well, we can say fancifully that if there had been no Raymond Carver, *Short Cuts* might look much better. (The same fancy would help lots of films: if there had been no Nabokov, Kubrick's *Lolita* would be first-rate.) But when significant literary antecedents are involved, comparisons with their film versions must press on us—if not for complete fidelity of detail

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Dr. Bethune. *Donald Sutherland is striking as Norman Bethune, the politically radical Canadian physician who served in the Spanish Civil War and the Chinese revolution. The editing is a bit fuzzy, but Sutherland prevails. (Reviewed 8/3/93)* **Manhattan Murder Mystery.** *Woody Allen, the amateur actor, doesn't help his own script; still, there are laughs. The title tells all we need to know of the subject in advance. (10/4/93)* **Samba Traoré.** *Idrissa Ouédraogo once again spins a tale of Burkina Faso with taking simplicity. A villager who commits a crime in a city returns to his village, and the crime has its effects. (10/4/93)* **Wittgenstein.** *Expertly distilled biography, acutely directed, finely acted. Derek Jarman departs from his former lush directing style and gains real richness. (10/11/93)* **—SK**

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then certainly for similarity of tone.

Carver's pervasive quality, under his terse style, is compassion. He sees ordinary twentieth-century Americans battling circumstance, and he sees the odds against them. The struggle is not so much with the specifics in any one story: it's a profound struggle for purpose and relief, though they are strapped to the harshness of our times. Carver's people have their visions deepened by small epiphanies: a couple, apartment-sitting for neighbors, tries on the figurative garments of another life; a wife discovers things about herself when her fisherman-husband tells her that he managed to ignore a body for a few days. Not all of the stories depict large crises; sometimes it's the very smallness of the event that shows how easy it is to split lives to the core.

In Altman, however, compassion extends only to plainly terrible moments, such as death. Most of the time, unlike Carver, he merely observes, often satirically. In addition, he misses no chance to exploit sex. Sex is very present in Carver, but generally it's treated as a constant unfathomable mystery in otherwise prosaic lives. Altman seizes every sexual moment to move from mystery to flaunting. Often it's not amplification of Carver, it's invention. He gives one of Carver's characters a wife who earns money doing telephone sex while holding a small child on her lap. It's the kind of smirk that Altman knows he can't be reproved for in these liberated times.

Probably the worst aspect of *Short Cuts*, vis-à-vis Carver, is the most successful of the film devices—the interweaving of the stories. One of Carver's best attributes is his sense of form, and that form can be seen only when the story stands alone. To read a Carver collection is to walk through a gallery of beautifully formed objects. To blend his stories into "soup," no matter how smartly, to see them "as just one story," is to vandalize good art, to rationalize filmic opportunism as aesthetic principle.

Two of the actors in the large cast are unbearable. Robert Downey Jr., playing a Hollywood make-up artist who specializes in horror effects, patently sees himself as floating on a sea of hip appeal. He sinks. Jack Lemmon plays the grandfather of the dying boy; Altman and Barhydt haul him into the hospital on thin pretext and then give him a fat monologue. It's about the long-ago infidelity that wrecked his marriage, and he tells it to his son who at that moment is more concerned with his own son. The whole part is a vulgar concept, and Lemmon acts it accordingly.

Almost all the others fill their parts to bursting. The women are especially vivid: Madeleine Stowe as a harried and betrayed wife, Jennifer Jason Leigh as the telephone-sex mom, Andie MacDowell as the mother of the dying boy, Julianne Moore as the artist-wife of a jealous husband, Anne Archer as a woman who supports her unemployed spouse by clowning at children's parties, are all outstanding.

But the humanity with which they fill their roles can't prevail against the fact that they are trapped in Altman's gimmicky stories and that the sheer quantity of those stories is supposed to distract us from their quality. Throughout the film, the feeling grows that these good actors are being grabbily utilized by the director; the object of the film is not empathy but his self-celebration. All the nominal subjects—agony, affection, passion, hate, remorse—are finally congealed by Altman's mechanistic cleverness. •

The strange new life of Edith Wharton.

Missed Manners

By Andrew Delbanco

When Edith Wharton supervised the design of her summer house at Lenox, she made it, inside and out, a showcase of propriety. Facing the house (which she called "The Mount," after an ancestor's estate), one finds a rhythm of windows and doors that is absolutely regular, though closer inspection reveals that several of the front "windows" are illusions created by closed shutters. When one looks through a real window and sees what appears to be another window opening onto the rear garden, it turns out to be a mirror placed on an interior wall. Inside, every room is relentlessly symmetrical; if a door is hung off center, you can count on its being balanced by a second door on the same wall, even if this one opens onto nothing but a solid panel. And if a room is meant to feel enclosed and tranquil, a knobless door (required for access from the adjacent room) is disguised by continuous molding, and blends imperceptibly with the wall.

To us, this world seems utterly false. Where we value candor, Wharton valued tact. A perfect expression of her aesthetic imagination, The Mount is a treasury of *trompes l'oeil* in which deception and concealment are turned to the service of surface harmonies. It is the house of a woman who, though contemptuous of the saturated Victorian interiors in which she had grown up, had not yet made the turn toward the modern. And her principles of design were not far from her literary practice. Where we esteem writing that probes and discloses, she still wrote about surfaces in a prose whose sibilance and alliteration evoke the swish and glitter of the dance:

> the light of the wax candles fell on revolving tulle skirts, on girlish heads wreathed with modest blossoms, on the dashing aigrettes and ornaments of the young married women's coiffures and on the glitter of highly glazed shirtfronts and fresh glacé gloves . . .

The chief decoration of Wharton's houses, of course, is their women, who are dressed according to the same principles of containment and concealment. Laced and corseted, they display neck and shoulders but not much else. If a hint of sexual frankness comes through these prescribed limits, it is judged "perverse and provocative," as in the case of the Countess Olenska's "long robe of red velvet [that was] bordered about the chin and down the front with glossy black fur"—a properly opaque wrapping, but one that leaves every man atremble with the thought of the skin and hair that it conceals and emulates.

The Buccaneers
by Edith Wharton
completed by Marion Mainwaring
(Viking, 407 pp., $22)

Fast and Loose
and *The Buccaneers*
by Edith Wharton
edited by Viola Hopkins Winner
(University Press of Virginia, 514 pp., $49.50, $14.95 paper)

The Age of Innocence
directed by Martin Scorsese
(Columbia)

Wharton had grown up in a "hieroglyphic world where the real thing is never said or done or even thought," and life was conducted in "an atmo-

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sphere of faint implications and pale delicacies." She belonged to a class in which a scandalous affair would be made manifest in the way a married man sits slouched in a chair while a woman who is not his wife stands beside him (as her friend and mentor Henry James conveys the fact of adultery in *The Portrait of a Lady*, or as in *The Ambassadors*, in the way a man and woman sit together in a rowboat, he in his shirtsleeves).

We tend to consider this superseded world as prudish and unfree. We think of its people as imprisoned. And yet we are drawn to it powerfully, as to an object of desire. The Manhattan audience with whom I stood on line to see Martin Scorsese's film of *The Age of Innocence* (Wharton's best novel, published in 1920, when she was nearly 60) was, according to the standards of her time and her class, a band of degenerates. Some couples were sexually demonstrative. Others wore clothing more revealing than concealing, and spoke what Wharton would have regarded as gutter-talk. When the audience got inside, however, and the film got rolling, there were only noises of contentment. The theater sounded as if it were filled with kids humming while eating chocolate. Scorsese's slow pans over dining tables laden with Japanese and Meissen porcelain, arrangements of camellias and lilies, incised silver and decanted wine, were greeted with sighs and murmurs.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

These are the sort of people who are loyal to Masterpiece Theater, Laura Ashley, Merchant and Ivory, the Bombay Company and Victoria's Secret. They are, presumably, the people whom Bloomingdale's and Columbia Pictures have in mind for their current movie tie-in offer of a $1000 gift certificate for the best "100-word true or fictional story" about unfulfilled love. (On behalf of second prize winners, two dozen yellow roses will be sent to "someone you loved," the romance being all in the verb's past tense.) And these days I wake up every morning to an announcement on National Public Radio, the compleat yuppie's favorite source of news and opinion, that Scorsese's movie is supporting "Morning Edition," and the same spot runs in the afternoon on "All Things Considered."

What is going on? Why do so many of us who live in the age of the explicit—when a man in Newland Archer's position would surely run off with his countess—seem to have a yearning for the age of discretion? The Wharton revival that is upon us (the new edition of *The Buccaneers* is a Book-of-the-Month Club main selection) contains, I think, a hint of an answer. It is not an isolated phenomenon. Two sequels of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* are underway, from which we shall presumably learn whether Elizabeth and Darcy have kept the fires glowing. The cover story of the fall issue of *Psychology Today* is entitled "Rekindling Old Flames." And Scorsese, the director of such brutal and gritty movies as *GoodFellas*, *Raging Bull* and *Mean Streets*, is blunt about what drew him to Wharton's drawing rooms and gardens and botanical pavilions: until now, he says, he has "never really found the right thing for romance, because ... I don't *know* it in the modern world. I can't sense it ... so therefore I ... want[ed] to do something very lush and sensual from a period where the texture was stronger."

Scorsese's film succeeds because it catches the feeling of a time when conflict between public propriety and private desire was an inescapable fact of life, and when, if they came into direct opposition, the former proved stronger than the latter. It is about a social order that put a price on illicit pleasure. And it returns us to a virtually medieval idea of chaste love. In the central scene in which the countess (still married to her Polish rogue of a husband and inhibited from seeking a divorce because he has threatened to publicize her own infidelities) tells Archer that she can only love him by giving him up, Scorsese conveys the exquisite pain of obstructed desire by turning the two of them, physically, into a human arabesque. They coil their bodies together, tortured, until their clothed figures make one continuous sinew—his head arched down to her hip, hers thrown forward upon the curve of his back. It is a brilliant visual emblem for the passion to which they cannot submit. This movie is also a work about salvation through renunciation (no less than Francis Ford Coppola's blood-drenched *Dracula*, a film more obviously informed by the presence of AIDS as the chief symbol of mortality in contemporary consciousness). The only removal of clothing comes in an intensely erotic scene when Archer, pressed close against Ellen in a narrow brougham, unbuttons and peels back her tight, calfskin gloves and kisses her exposed wrists.

That Scorsese has managed to make a sexy movie with a P.G. rating is no small triumph in this age of explicitness, in which there is always a compulsion (and a commercial reward) for exceeding the frankness of last year. Scorsese seems to have realized that the steady intensification of the erotic currency in our culture—more violence, more raunch, more speed—has led to a certain depreciation of it. And so, with a charming haughtiness, he has reversed course and

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made a film about indirection, about a world that insisted on standing still. He touches a nerve in us, I think, because this tale reminds us that in such a world—where conventional kisses tended to be "a fugitive pressure on [the] lips," or a brush of "the forehead with the tip of his moustache"—the possibilities for real passion may have been incomparably larger than in our own.

Wharton reported on a small privileged corner of this world, but she did it with precision and elegance. Her portraits of women without beauty or wealth are studies in the experience of being discarded; and the figure of Ellen Olenska in *The Age of Innocence* only hints at the lifelong torture to which unhappily married women were condemned. She wrote with a combination of sympathy and disgust about women who used their sexuality, with trained calculation, to preserve or build their social station, and about the men who used them to breed. Here, from *The Custom of the Country* (1913), is the icy Undine Spragg issuing her first kiss:

> It was the first time she had permitted [her suitor] a kiss, and as his face darkened down on her she felt a moment's recoil. But her physical reactions were never very acute: she always vaguely wondered why people made "such a fuss," were so violently for or against such demonstrations. A cool spirit within her seemed to watch over and regulate her sensations, and leave her capable of measuring the intensity of those she provoked.

Wharton could write like this because, despite her charter membership in this world, she hated it, in certain moods. Scorsese's loving camera does not reproduce the entirety of Wharton's attitude toward this world. She described the old New York crowd as "aborigines" when the pejorative force of that word was still unqualified. She herself lived half in it and half out. She took a lover in her forties, long before she terminated her own sexless marriage by divorce. She stood with Newland Archer when he protested that he and his peers were "as like each other as those dolls cut out of the same folded paper ... like patterns stenciled on a wall." And she wrote with disgust about the "vacant serenity" of Archer's "limpid" bride, May Welland, and about his sister, Janey, whose "brown and purple poplins hung, as the years went on, more and more slackly on her virgin frame." Wharton loathed these deracinated people, and set them up in *The Age of Innocence* like a ring of mannequins surrounding the two living beings—Archer and the countess—whom she placed at the book's center.

Yet at the root of Wharton's art is the

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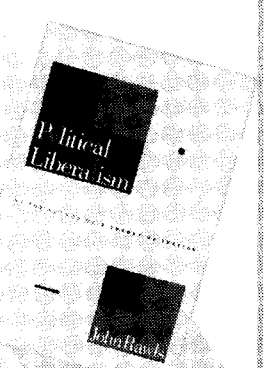

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fact that she could not do without this orderly world, and was unwilling, like the Countess Olenska, to give it up. Since R. W. B. Lewis's biography appeared nearly twenty years ago (to which Marion Mainwaring contributed valuable research), it has been known that Wharton carried on a passionate extramarital affair with a man of the world named Morton Fullerton from about 1908 to 1910. We also know that she composed some remarkably free-spirited pornography (which the scholar Cynthia Griffin Wolff has dated around 1918). In some respects, then, *The Age of Innocence* is a retelling of Wharton's own story, but with the sexual release deferred. Its hampered lovers are denied their consummation even though Wharton herself must have felt, when the countess first taps Archer's "knee with her plumed fan," how this mediated touch "thrills him like a caress." She denied them because she also knew the extent to which such a moment threatened to explode the universe he is reluctant to renounce, and into which the countess wishes to be admitted.

If today it is almost impossible to apprehend the conditions under which men and women once felt morally tested by such a choice between desire and respectability, it had already become a challenge for Wharton in 1920. By then she was speaking of the nineteenth century as "a blessed refuge from the turmoil and mediocrity of today," and knew she had written a book about what she later called that "distant period of the '70s," which seemed, with "every year that passes ... more like a fairy tale." She wanted her novel not to be taken as a "costume drama," but as a "simple and grave" story about "two people trying to live up to something"—a code of social propriety—"that was still 'felt in the blood.'"

Wharton was devoted to this disappearing culture (as a subject and, in some moods, as an ideal) because it had been built, above all, on the principle of tact. Its central axiom was the recognition that once a transgressive impulse is expressed or publicly acted upon, it can never be retracted. There is no such thing, this culture knew, as a jury that can truly "disregard"—no matter how sternly instructed by the judge—something it has heard or seen. Once you have strayed, you are branded an outsider. This is a world without forgiveness. Thus there is a gangsterish quality to Wharton's old New York social clique, which, when someone steps out of line, proves as expert at shunning, expulsion and other forms of social murder as any of Scorsese's mobsters. Scorsese's previous work prepared him well for translating the late scenes of this novel in which the family musters its force to expel the countess and then links arms to keep her out, lest she return to carry off one of its sons.

We have a name for writers who chronicle the lives of such people. We call them "novelists of manners." Yet surely this is a tautology. All novels are ultimately about the predicament of the self as it is contained within some social structure, that is to say, within some system of rules. The learning of manners, the hating of them coupled with the relief at their compulsion, their cruelty to the self and their simultaneous necessity for social coherence: this has been the stuff of fiction from the start. The novel is a literary form that can exist only as long as something like an equilibrium persists between the inhibiting influence of social authority and the insolence of the individual. For this reason, the form has been deranged lately by the loss of the concept of legitimate inhibition—indeed, of the legitimacy of culture itself. Wharton did have an impulse to pull off the tablecloth and send everything crashing to the floor. She was a bohemian. She was a feminist. But she was first and foremost a novelist. And she knew that without manners, there can be no stories.

This dividedness, I think, is the quality that gives *The Age of Innocence* its tautness and intimacy, and that makes it Wharton's best book. In its famous closing scene, the now-widowed Newland Archer sits rooted to a bench in a Paris square beneath the windows of Ellen's apartment, to which his son has led him in the hope of allowing his father a reunion with the woman whom, he now knows, he had loved far beyond his dutiful feelings toward his mother. Archer gazes up at the flat, imagines the figure of the woman he loved and relinquished and says quietly to himself, "It's more real to me here than if I went up." Then he gets up and walks back to his hotel alone. In this, all the force of Wharton's art and thought is summed up. Though Scorsese makes mistakes along the way (the music is too sinister; Daniel Day-Lewis's Archer is, at first, too dusky; Michelle Pfeiffer cannot quite convey such subtleties as a "smile [passing] from [Ellen's] eyes to her lips"), he has remained loyal to the spirit of Wharton's painful book.

Nothing, unfortunately, could be less true of the other Wharton event of the season, the deeply disloyal one. There has appeared a new version, "completed" by Marion Mainwaring, of *The Buccaneers*, Wharton's final and unfinished novel. *The Buccaneers* is an interesting book in Wharton's career, not just because it was the last (the idea was germinating in the early 1930s, and she worked on it sporadically until her death in 1937), but also because it is the book in which she returns to the historical moment that had captivated her in *The Age of Innocence*, when the rules of high social life had been stable and clear. The work of an old woman writing fancifully about the young, it was composed at the close of Wharton's years as a *grande dame* in the 1920s and '30s, when she held court at her suburban Paris estate to intellectuals with advanced ideas. It came after her reading of Nietzsche and Proust and Freud and Dreiser, after her friendships with Sinclair Lewis and Aldous Huxley and her encounters with renegades like Scott Fitzgerald. It would seem to be the work of a woman who has broken free of the constraints that had hemmed in her peers in the age of innocence.

And its story promises to conform to such expectations. It is the tale of two dashing daughters whose father's money is too "new" to gain them acceptance in New York society. So, upon learning that English gentlemen—in need of fresh fortunes to keep up their estates—have fewer scruples about the pedigree of their brides, they are sent to take their chances in England. The result for the older one—the conventional beauty—is a marriage that improves her social station. For the younger one, Annabel (Nan), who is a vivacious seeker, the result is a marriage to the tradition-bound Duke of Tintagel, who soon disappoints her spiritually and sexually—and from whom she drifts away toward a dreamy young gentleman portentously named Guy.

This plot promises not just a revisiting of *The Age of Innocence*, but a revision of it—or so, at least, Marion Mainwaring wants it to be. Wharton did leave a sketchy "scenario" of a conclusion, which indicates that she intended her heroine to leave her husband and join her lover, and she had completed twenty-nine chapters, which are inconclusive in respect to the unwritten denouement. Mainwaring is determined to make the story come out right this time. And so she not only "completes" the ending, she intervenes in places that Wharton herself had completed. She plants very broad hints in the middle of Wharton's narrative—inventing, for instance, a speech by the duke on his taste in collecting ("there is no satisfaction," Mainwaring has him say, "in owning a fragment") that prepares the way for his remarriage after Nan has left

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him. He will end up, Mainwaring hints heavily, with a rich widow whose late husband just happened to have owned the other half of a classical sculpture whose fragment belongs to the duke.

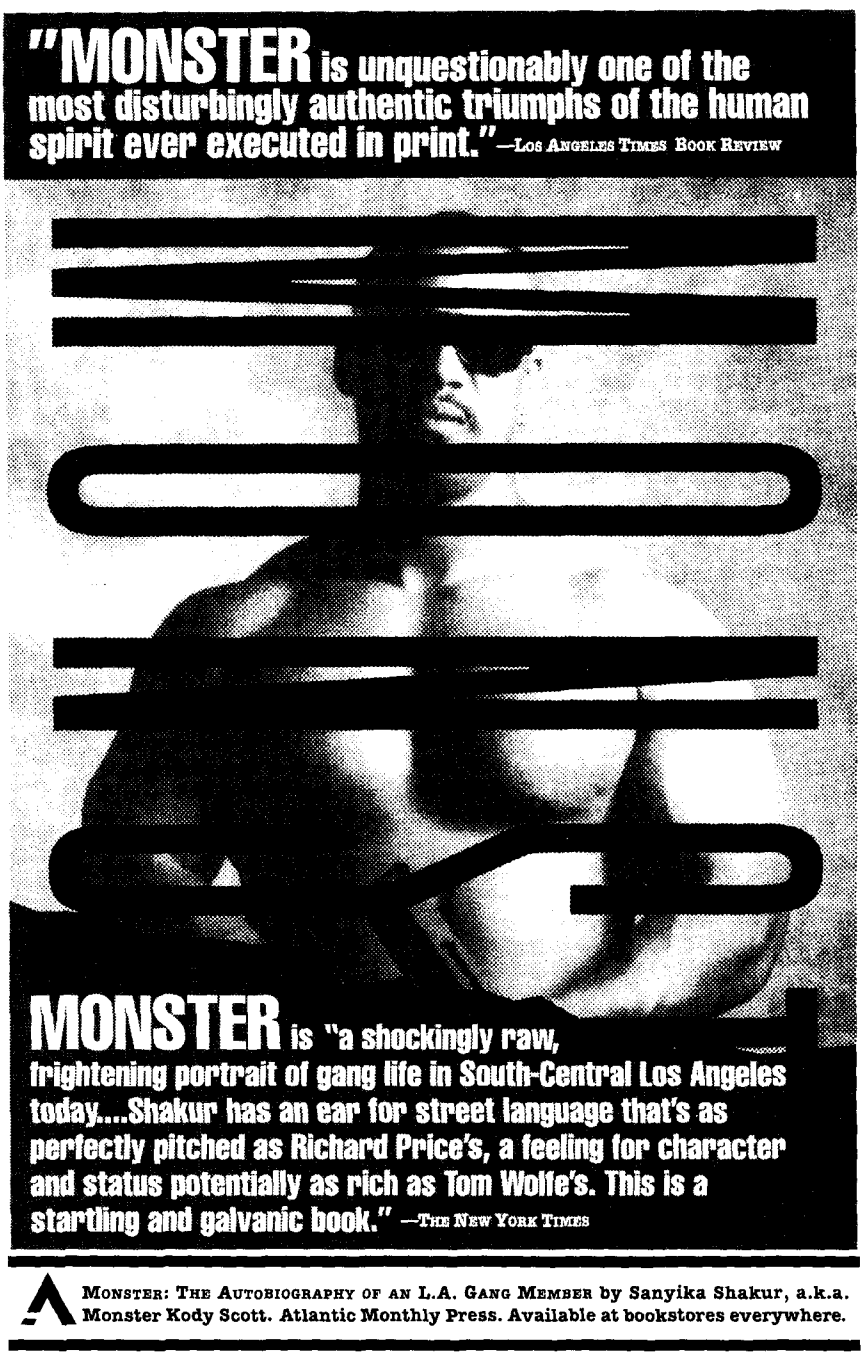
A little of this sort of thing goes a long way. But Mainwaring never loses her nerve for freely supplementing Wharton's dialogue (Wharton herself, in her memoir *A Backward Glance*, mentions dialogue as "an effect to be sparingly used"). She even subjects the whole of Wharton's text to a politically correct cleansing, making silent expurgations that she justifies by the tiresome explanation that "changes have been made ... when ... Wharton referred to race in terms offensive to modern readers." Perhaps some enterprising editor should go back to *The House of Mirth* and expunge the lines about the "small, stock-taking eyes" of the Jewish businessman Rosedale. The political corrector's work is never done.

Even less explicable are Mainwaring's putative stylistic improvements, which are also unsignaled. Wharton, for instance, reports her heroine's discovery that she has married a sexless man by writing that "the thought that she had even imagined Ushant [the duke] as a lover made her smile, and she turned away from the window." Mainwaring feels compelled to distend this sentence by inserting a phrase with which she can flog the poor duke for his prudery, and make sure that the obtuse reader gets the point: "The thought that she had even imagined Ushant as a lover—imagined him, any more than his mother, *approving* of pleasure—made Annabel smile, and she turned away from the window."

This sort of thing is injected here and there without brackets or footnotes. There is nothing more than the remark in a one-paragraph afterword that "the passages I have interpolated in the original text serve to reconcile discrepancies in the narrative or prepare for later developments." Wharton writes of Nan that she is "barely nineteen." Mainwaring, for some unaccountable reason, prefers "she's only eighteen." Wharton writes, in a passage recounting Guy's thoughts during a tense visit with his father, that he realized "there were only three days left in which to utter" his feelings. Mainwaring changes this to: "there was so little time left ..."

The point here is not to make a sacred object out of Wharton's text. Scorsese, after all, also fiddles with it. When Archer, for instance, speaks in the novel of "harlots," Scorsese has Daniel Day-Lewis speak of "whores." When Archer first touches the countess in the novel, and is engulfed by the sheer power of her physical presence, Wharton conveys this sensation by writing that "far down the inverted telescope he saw the pale white figure of [his betrothed] May Welland"—but Scorsese breaks up the image and relocates it in a scene where we see May small and inverted through the lens of the bridal photographer. In another scene that has no exact corollary in the novel, he leaches out her image completely by washing the screen with a burst of orange-red light into which she disappears as if incinerated. These are acts of genuine translation from one genre to another. But what in the world does Mainwaring think she is doing when she effects her "improvements" in a novel that still bears Wharton's name?

The Buccaneers is no masterpiece; but Mainwaring's tampering raises the question of whether we have reached the point in our attitude toward artistic integrity when we would applaud the improver of the old masters who walked, say, into the National Gallery in London and started to color in Leonardo's cartoon? Mainwaring is apparently devoted to Wharton—but in fact she has only provided another warning about the damage that devotion can do. Perhaps she arrived at her changes through a careful study of manuscript-variants (several versions survive in the Beinecke library at Yale), but then she should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A Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member by Sanyika Shakur, a.k.a. Monster Kody Scott. Atlantic Monthly Press. Available at bookstores everywhere.

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have said so. More likely, what we have here is merely a case of presumptuous tinkering.

As it stands, this edition of *The Buccaneers* is a pastiche—the larger part composed by a writer devoted to precision and rhetorical tact, the smaller part by a writer whose ear is uncertain and who cannot leave the original work alone. It should be noted that the first published version of *The Buccaneers* was already an act of collaboration, since it was established by Wharton's executor Gaillard Lapsley (who explained that it was simply "too good to hold back") from manuscripts that Wharton left in various states of incomplete revision. But the responsible thing to do, which is exactly what Viola Hopkins Winner has done in her annotated edition, which reprints *The Buccaneers* along with a novel that Wharton wrote in her teens, *Fast and Loose*, is to try to get the text as close to Wharton's final intention as possible, and then to indicate where surmise and editorial choice are at work.

The further trouble with Mainwaring's interventions is that the distance between the two writers is painfully large. From one of Wharton's matrons we get this marvelous evaluation of the older sister: "She will probably get whatever she wants in life, and will give in return only her beautiful profile. I don't believe her soul has a full face." From Mainwaring we get Nan putting "her hand to her heart as if she had been stabbed" when she hears that Guy is being urged toward another woman, and then a long passage in which it is not clear whether she is contemplating an atlas or a globe, until we are told that "as the countries of the world rolled past in varnished yellows, pale greens and pinks ... the small world that was herself was suddenly decentralized." Decentralized? The word is as appropriate as a saxophone in a string quartet.

The list of stylistic offenses could go on; but the bad fit between the body of the text and Mainwaring's concluding chapters is also thematic. Wharton was a writer who believed that "a frivolous society can acquire dramatic significance only through what its frivolity destroys," and that the "tragic implication" of such frivolity "lies in its power of debasing people and ideals." Yet Mainwaring prepares with callow eagerness for the final act of Nan's abandoning her husband, which Wharton had indicated in her "scenario," until it becomes not just the central drama of the book, but its required culmination. In fact, the scenario, as well as a long passage in *A Backward Glance*, suggest that Wharton was more deeply interested in the psychological consequences of these events for another character, Nan's governess, who has urged her on toward freedom, and that the elopement itself is almost subsidiary.

In Mainwaring's version, the escape from marriage becomes the sole point: first Nan reads, in various fictions, about tyrannical and sexually cold husbands. Then she daydreams about the time, as a child, when she and her sister, "to their mother's horror ... had tucked up their pinafores and ridden a broad-backed Shetland pony astride." After a sufficient dose of such reading and remembering, Mainwaring figures that Nan is hot enough for her rendezvous with her lover—but we, the readers, are simply embarrassed by all the foreplay. Wharton's book, in sum, has been transformed into a bodice-ripper, complete with the appearance of the conquering hero, mounted "on a roan mare" and looking so dashing that Nan's "heart seemed to turn over inside her, and her hands on the reins became tight fists as she halted." Guy "mutter[s] against her cheek"; she strokes his "thick fair hair," and as she shivers at "every breath of the body so close to hers," he tells her that she is "like a flower unfolding ... a rose coming to bloom."

All this panting and crooning is a far cry from the restraint and the bittersweetness with which Wharton herself writes about the coming together of socially unsanctioned lovers in her late novels like *Hudson River Bracketed* (1929) and *The Gods Arrive* (1932), in which she has them sit silent, with at most a touch of hands, or a pensive walk together arm in arm. The blurb on the dust jacket of *The Buccaneers* (from Leon Edel!) declares that this edition is the product of "a lively posthumous collaboration." It seems more like an exercise in literary necrophilia to me.

Some years ago, in these pages, Barbara Probst Solomon wrote (after Scribner's released its doctored version of Hemingway's last novel, *The Garden of Eden*) that "nobody can finish an unfinished novel for a writer, and nobody should presume to try." Of course, it has been done before—with Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, with Stephen Crane's *The O'Ruddy*—and it will be done again. But, quite apart from legal questions (I presume the original text of *The Buccaneers* is out of copyright, or that permission to alter it was granted by the Wharton estate), there is something particularly troubling about this case.

What Marion Mainwaring has done is to drag Edith Wharton into our time, by turning her novel into a triumphant story of a young woman's escape from a passionless marriage. But there is reason to doubt that Wharton would have written it with anything like Mainwaring's jolly insouciance (the dissolution of Wharton's own marriage caused her pain and self-doubt, and her sexual awakening with Fullerton was psychologically very complex). There is reason to doubt, moreover, whether Wharton would have written it at all. Mainwaring's premise seems to be that this novel was left unfinished for the simple reason that its author died. She has made a spectacular mistake.

For there is evidence that Wharton was struggling in her waning months with what she had written. She "devoted," as Viola Winner says in a textual note to the annotated edition, "her creative energy ... to revision of what ... was the first three-fourths of the book rather than forging ahead to complete it." One of her friends, to whom she had shown the work, "counted five sets of revisions." Every writer knows that continual revision can be a delaying tactic when the will to plunge ahead is lacking; and though I do not presume to know the reason why this will was slackening for Wharton, it is, it seems to me, at least possible that she did not finish *The Buccaneers* not because of her failing health, but because she was not fully committed to carrying out the ending that her own "scenario" prescribed.

The Buccaneers constitutes one of those instances in American literary history—along with Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes*—where the text itself suggests a blockage in the mind of the writer, an impediment to completion. Its most deeply felt pages are not about release and the allure of freedom, but about resignation and the imperatives of duty. Here is Nan midway in the novel, as she begins to ponder her fate:

> Here [in England] ... everything was done by rule, and according to tradition, and for the Duchess of Tintagel to keep her guests waiting for luncheon would have been an offense against conventions almost as great as that of not being at her post when the company were leaving the night before. A year ago [she] would have laughed at these rules and observances; now, though they chafed her no less, she was beginning to see the use of having one's whims and one's rages submitted to some kind of control....
>
> Yes; in spite of her anger, in spite of her desperate sense of being trapped, Annabel felt in a confused way that the business of living was perhaps conducted more wisely at Longlands ....

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This is the authentic Wharton—the writer who despised the constraints imposed upon the spirit of a vibrant young woman, but who also wrote with feeling about the drudgery and toil of the stoic men who supplied such women with daily flowers with which to adorn themselves. It is the Wharton who imagined real human freedom only in what she called "the republic of spirit," and who wrote not only about the pain of entrapment, but about the possibilities of dignity for the trapped. And here is Archer thinking back on his life with May:

> Their long years together had shown him that it did not so much matter if marriage was a dull duty, as long as it kept the dignity of a duty: lapsing from that, it became a mere battle of ugly appetites. Looking about him, he honored his own past and mourned for it. After all, there was good in the old ways.

Edith Wharton was much too serious an artist to have brought *The Buccaneers* to a banal ending. The worst mutilation in Mainwaring's edition is the fact that she finished *The Buccaneers* at all.

ANDREW DELBANCO teaches at Columbia University. He is completing a book on evil in the American imagination.

Marine Dreams

BY JAMES HAMILTON-PATERSON

The Oxford Book of the Sea
edited by Jonathan Raban

(Oxford University Press, 524 pp., $24.95, $12.95 paper)

Europe and the Sea
by Michel Mollat du Jourdin
translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan

(Blackwell, 258 pp., $24.95)

Haunts of the Black Masseur: The Swimmer as Hero
by Charles Sprawson

(Pantheon, 307 pp., $23)

By derivation the word "oceanography" means the writing or the delineation of the ocean, and so might properly include almost any attempt to represent on paper that illimitable, resonant, fluid mass. Thus literature, painting, music and computer printouts might all function as kinds of oceanography. This would be no less true of a marine anthology.

Start by admitting that one is not fond of the genre. In today's terms we might think of the anthology as a "themed" book consisting of "word bites" suitable for the reduced attention span of the contemporary reader. What, precisely, is the purpose of such a book? An "overview," maybe. (The very word seems to belong to the age of satellites, the geostationary optics that have replaced the eye of God. Far from being *sub specie aeternitatis*, we are now firmly in our own disenchanted gaze.) An overview of the sea, then, might delineate the liquid blank that covers seven-tenths of the planet's surface. All right, then, imagine *The Oxford Book of Dry Land*: of what might that consist?

Jonathan Raban recognizes the difficulty and admits to having started out by trying to compile "a book of the sea—not a book of voyages, naval battles, shipboard life, fishing or any of the other activities that take place in, or on, or at the edge of, the sea." Eventually, while further conceding that "the French sea, the German sea, the Japanese sea are importantly different places," he resigns himself to covering "the sea in English literature." Those seven-tenths shrink to a pond. How otherwise does one compile a manageable anthology? (So why compile an anthology?) In his long and valuable introduction, Raban hints that he has been prey to precisely such rueful reflections. In fact, this essay feels as though it contains the seeds of the book that he might have written about his own sea, more speculative, more conceptual-

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ized: the book we may regret that he didn't write.

What we get instead is excellent in parts, though inevitably one takes issue with some of his choices. The pieces are arranged chronologically rather than by subject, and those centuries just have to be covered. Slabs of Spenser, Donne and Chapman's Homer seem included as much out of piety as for anything of particular note that they have to say about the sea, or about contemporary attitudes toward it. They certainly remind us that the whole glittering costume jewelry of coral, bones, pearls, mermaids, treasure, tempests and classical allusion was hackneyed even by Shakespeare's day. This is the sea as metaphor, tricked out with the standard exotica, and it repeats itself in much the same terms over and over again, until a historical point is reached when at last there is the clear impression of an observer watching a real sea with an individual's gaze, a modern eye.

This happens at some moment in the age of Enlightenment—in the present instance, say, with the extract from Benjamin Franklin's precocious *Journal of a Voyage* (1726)—when writing about the sea begins most obviously to benefit from scientific discovery and rapidly changing attitudes to natural phenomena. Until then, in the long pre-scientific age, attitudes toward such phenomena had the tendency to become fossilized into patterns of thought and language that to us may seem indistinguishable from a radical lack of curiosity. Thousands of people went to sea: fishermen, merchants, explorers, diplomats and—of necessity—any Briton with business abroad. Yet to judge from such accounts of their travels as they did leave, they mainly took the sea itself for granted, as being in some way too obvious or boring to record. They dealt with disasters, of course: wreckings, storms, becalmings, shortages of water, scurvy (no lemons). But these were incidental hitches along an otherwise unremarked way, the blowouts and the tailbacks of preindustrial travel.

This in itself is interesting, leading us to wonder what in our modern world we generally don't bother to describe, finding it too commonplace. Air travel, possibly; freeway travel, certainly. Maybe in some post-technological future they will marvel at the thousands of miles driven yearly by millions of people in the late twentieth century, most of which left not a mark in the journalism, the diaries and the literature of the period. The motorway traveler in Britain, for example, might well find remarkable the frequently abrupt changes in weather (as on a trip between London and Scotland). One often traverses whole landscapes of shifting meteorology, emerging from a county wrapped in mist into one shafted with light, outrunning rain or being plunged into a strange unseasonal fragment of summer adrift for a few miles somewhere up beside the Pennines. A long journey of these sudden changes of mood and vision can leave one strangely exhilarated and exhausted; depressed, even, as though by the compression of a lifetime's imagery into a few hours of discarded journey. Such things are rarely spoken of in print. Likewise, scarcely a voyager until the eighteenth century observed closely the changing light of the ocean, his own reactions to the colors and the movements of waves, the smells peculiar to different latitudes, whole gamuts of sounds. Were they all blind? Deaf? Aesthetically numb? Or just boring men of affairs hurrying as best they might along chancy ocean freeways with thoughts only for far-off meetings and appointments?

Suddenly it strikes us: they didn't see these things because they couldn't see them. This was the mythic Deep, full of menace and monsters. It wasn't open to them to view it with a later age's objectivity. The history of Western graphic art shows what the psychology of perception has proved, that human beings cannot perceive something until they know what it is they are supposed to be perceiving. Or, more bluntly, we see only what is already patterned in our minds.

This goes against common sense, but still it is demonstrably so. The locus classicus is Durer's woodcut of a rhinoceros, which he made in 1515. The artist had never seen such an animal alive or dead. He worked from travelers' descriptions and hearsay, and he was crucially influenced by archetypes such as dragons for its body with armored plates. This woodcut itself became an archetype that lasted until the end of the eighteenth century even in natural history books: so powerful an image that an engraving of a rhino drawn from life in 1789 retained the animal's fictitious armor, which by then had become essential to its recognition even in an age of natural science.

All this is most pertinent to descriptions of the sea and its denizens. For me, almost the only interesting prescientific writing of the sea comes in accounts of voyages of discovery, precisely because mariners were expecting marvels. Faced with the utterly novel, they were forced to confront it and find a way of describing phenomena for which their cultural apparatus often had no existing categories, thereby revealing the mindset of their times under vivid strain. There is little enough of this in Raban's anthology, though, except maybe the extract from George Anson's *A Voyage Around the World* (1748); certainly nothing as revealing as the accounts of Captain Cook's three great voyages a quarter of a century later, in which, effectively, part of an entirely new planet was disclosed for the first time.

It is presumptuous to lament what is not in someone else's anthology. In any case, the idea that artists and scientists perforce see things with the eye of their age—through its intellectual apparatus and imagery—is scarcely novel. By the time we reach Edgar Allan Poe we feel entirely free to speculate that if he were writing today he would choose a black hole instead of a maelstrom for his hero to fall into. Indeed, how similar these two semi-fictive phenomena are, with their abrogation of the normal rules of physics (Poe's narrator finds his usually *trusty watch has stopped and throws it* away) and the vertiginous sense of being dragged beyond mental limits.

It is still sometimes claimed by those eager to maintain the exclusive polarity between science and the humanities, C. P. Snow's "two cultures," that science is reductive, constantly undermining and threatening with its niggling "facts" the boundless universe of the imagination. Nothing proves this clap-trap so absurd as a quick overview of maritime writing, something that this collection nicely illustrates. With each successive scientific advance the imagination of the time was further enabled, expanded, excited and liberated. Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," here printed in its entirety, is a case in point.

Today, under the pressure of sudden panic, our attitude to the natural world has changed yet again. It is now conservationist, and it is through that nostalgic vision that we necessarily view the ocean. This fits with Raban's observation about the appropriateness of Conrad's title for his essays, *The Mirror of the Sea*: "The writer who goes to sea finds himself confronting a disturbed reflection of his own age, personality and preoccupations." For writer read anthologist, too, of course. Raban is himself a yachtsman, and he quite properly reflects it in his many extracts from assorted mariners ranging from Joshua Slocum to John Barth. I would have been content with Slocum; the modern literary gents doing their winsome familial founderings in the Chesapeake Bay have a glassy, self-pleased lubberliness about them.

It is curious that nobody in these later extracts, not even Rachel Carson, sounds the modern note of ruined oceans as powerfully as Conrad did himself,

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though his was a private and even slightly hysterical vision that has only lately been given scientific underpinning. Thoreau got it half wrong: "Serpents, bears, hyenas, tigers, rapidly vanish as civilization advances, but the most populous and civilized city cannot scare a shark far from its shores." (Nothing dates like Wisdom. Several varieties of shark are endangered species.)

Meanwhile, what of the sea as metaphor? Raban is right to say that modern, non-oceanographic maritime writers are still in thrall to the great nineteenth-century authors, using much of the same imagery and descriptive apparatus, just as he is surely wrong to say that modern oceanography is all too arcane and mathematical to merit a single extract. Certainly I would blithely exchange A. R. Wetjen's awful, exclamatory rubbish about The Sea As Woman ("beautiful and warm and cruel," ho-hum) for something of literary merit, seeing how we're locked into the blessed world of Lit. Something like Wallace Stevens's weighty little poem "Somnambulisma," perhaps, with its ravishingly original use of the ocean as a metaphor, more affectingly original, indeed, than any in this volume. But here one goes again, impertinently. Redemption is at hand with the inclusion of a fascinating description by David Lewis (1972) of Polynesian navigation by sea swells alone, so precise and so mysterious. It comes like a foreign ray of light amid the mellifluous nullities of Lit. to remind one that there are whole oceans out there that do not speak English and where knowledges reside that one longs to encounter far from the company of the Oxford University Press.

Professor du Jourdin's book offers us an entirely different overview. We have left Lit. and are now hove-to in Geopol. What on earth kind of a book is this, though? One of a series, we are told, so we might as well let the series editor have the first word:

> Europe is in the making ... great challenge ... taking the past into account .... Today's actions will be felt tomorrow ... help forge new friendships, and guide us towards progress ...

Amen. Such sententious drivel, part sermon and part chairman's address to the shareholders, declares this to be that dreaded object, a Eurobook. If the series editor has the first word, the book's translator has the last word as early as the preface: "The time is yet to come when a synthetic history of Europe will be possible ... " Well, be thankful for small mercies. Synthetic history, forsooth. What sort of a dim Hegelian ambition is that? To hell with the overview; we need the particular. Only the particular is ever as interesting to the literary as to the scientific mind, and as it should be to the historian's. This is truest of all where the sea is concerned. It is so liquid and mobile that its tendencies to dissolve and displace apply equally to theories, generalizations, cultural pretensions and spiritual effusions in its honor. The only remedy is detail, whether researched or experienced with affection, awe, disenchantment, loathing.

Or failing that, facts ought at least to be theorized into some sort of coherence; but there's little theory here. The book is a grab bag of more or less banal material (imagine trying to précis Braudel on the Mediterranean), vaguely marine, pertaining to a collection of countries that happen to share a contiguous coastline. Some of these places are perhaps a tad inland, such as Switzerland, Hungary, Austria and so on but, via rivers like the Rhine and the Danube, are sort of *connected* to the sea. In this vision the whole of Europe turns out to be maritime, like the state of Missouri. Some of the chapter headings are enlightening, in the tone and the content that they suggest. "The Ocean Enters the Stage" is my favorite, followed as it is by "The Framework Bursts Apart." After that there are sections on "The European Community of Seamen" and "A Cultural Dimension," ending with "Conclusion: And Now?"

And now the thing to do with overviews like this is to take a specific example or two. Never mind that European Community of Seamen, the icky brotherliness of whose title is absurdly at odds with the actuality of cod wars, herring wars, blockaded ports, bloody fights between trawlermen, disputed grounds, conflicting regulations and agreements with which everybody disagrees. Let us stick with Culture, with Lit. itself. Du Jourdin, who teaches history at the Sorbonne, would have been well advised to have read Raban's dexterous introduction before embarking (sic) on his perfunctory résumé of the sea in literature. At any rate he and his translator have this to say: "But the most complete, the most European, and in addition, a mariner, was perhaps Joseph Conrad, born in Poland, who took English nationality after having served for twenty years in the French and British merchant marines."

Well, sort of. Actually he served four years in the French and sixteen in the British and became ever more intensely what he had always been as a minor Polish aristocrat: right-wing, monarchist, anti-foreign, snobbish. The subtext here is an effort to show that Conrad was quintessentially European, the exemplar of a heartwarming internationalism. On the contrary, one can be perfectly certain that he would have loathed the Common Market with its worship of the polluting Goddess of Commerce who had smirched and ruined his romantic ocean. In *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896) he had written:

> Then a great pall of smoke sent out by countless steamboats was spread over the restless mirror of the Infinite. The hand of the engineer tore down the veil of the terrible beauty in order that greedy and faithless landlubbers might pocket dividends. The mystery was destroyed ....

Not one of nature's common marketeers.

Another of du Jourdin's subtexts is a reassuring anglophobia, though given his book's pretenses of European togetherness we must assume, alas, that it is unconscious. "The true victor of Trafalgar," we discover, "was Sicilian lemons, of which the British navy consumed thousands of tons." Lemons, by God! What kind of a rotten trick was that? Perfidious Albion resorts to the citrus weapon! A little further on France is again seen waving a medical certificate at the sheer unfairness of history. "Ill-health cost France several squadrons and lost it Canada." Golly, had we but *known* they were feeling poorly and not just crying Wolfe ...

All right, forget Lit. and Hist., move on to Mus. Now here's a subject on which something interesting might be written: the representation of the sea in Western music. Compare and contrast, say, the movement of water as depicted in works as diverse as Mendelssohn's Hebrides overture, Smetana's *Ma Vlast* and Britten's Sea Interludes from *Peter Grimes*. An excellent topic. What we get, however, is the following *aperçu*:

> The traditional use of themes has blended with those of nations, as Sibelius shows [what can this mean?] ... Sir Edward Elgar, too, in his *Sea Pictures* (1897-9) borrowed a large number of their subjects from the Celtic antiquities of Britain as well as from the daily life of the Port of London.

Sea Pictures consists of just five songs. Of this large number, none of the poems is obviously Celtic nor set nearer to London than Alice Elgar's own poem "In Haven," which might be anywhere (the sea as metaphor, you know) and is subtitled "Capri." Maybe some musical prankster has been playing a joke on the Prof., telling him that the song "Where Corals Lie" actually refers to the notoriously treacherous tropical reefs that make the Thames Estuary such a hazard to foreigners.

It ought to be a source of lament to anyone whose cradle-tongue is English

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The boycott also applies to international shipping, aviation and tourism: Most ships and airplanes calling on Israel are barred from Arab ports; airplanes enroute to and from Israel cannot overfly Arab countries. Israelis or any travelers with Israeli visas in their passports may not enter most Arab countries.

The Arab Boycott Office maintains a blacklist, which at last count included over 6,300 entries in 96 countries. In the United States alone, over 12,000 firms each year receive requests from Arab firms for boycott compliance. In Europe and Asia, where, in contrast to the United States, boycott compliance is usually legal, the numbers are probably much higher.

> "The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against the state of Israel. It is totally unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel."

The Cost of the Boycott to Israel. The primary damage of the boycott to the Israeli economy is that it prevents or considerably hampers investments in the country. That loss is estimated to be on the order of $500 to $600 million per year. The loss of potential trade with the Arab countries alone is on the order of over $500 million per year. Because of the boycott, Israel's commercial exports are at least 10% less than they would otherwise be—a loss of about $1.2 billion per year!

The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against Israel. The boycott is totally unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel, since the boycott started over twenty years before any such territories came under Israeli administration. Its purpose is the strangulation of Israel—to achieve by economic means what the Arabs, despite many tries, have been unable to achieve by military means. But the greatest losers of the boycott may well be the Arabs themselves. Blinded by their hatred of Israel they have prevented the Middle East from becoming an area of growth and prosperity exceeding even the Asian Pacific Rim countries. Rescinding the almost 50-year old boycott would be an encouraging signal to the world and to the Israeli public. Their not bringing even such a gesture does give a clue that the intentions of the Arabs are not peaceful and that Israel is justified in proceeding with greatest caution in any peace negotiations.

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that a mishmash of tortured versions of their language is steadily becoming a global lingua franca. This book's translator has already had one final word, but she shall have another, adrift on the tossing syntax of Eurospeak. On the subject of foreign languages, she and the professor are unequivocal: "On that point already the diffusion of English is an undeniable international commodity." Oh, weep.

It is a relief to get away from overviews to something concrete and lovingly observed. *Haunts of the Black Masseur* is subtitled "The Swimmer As Hero," which absolves it from being anything as worthy as a history of swimming. It is more an account of the rediscovery of swimming in a series of crazes—cults, really, whose god was that of water itself. The author, a classicist who recently swam the Hellespont, begins with the Greeks and the Romans, especially the Romans' near obsession with public baths, pools, washing, ornamental fountains, drainage systems and hydraulics generally.

This flowered (or declined, according to your viewpoint) into a really inventive decadence. Sprawson's idea is that all that sensual lolling around in baths full of oiled slave masseurs and minnow children for underwater fun gave luxury a bad name. Christian moralism had no doubts about the reasons for the fall of Rome, and for the next 1400 years swimming as an art died out in Europe, bathing and nudity being associated with the devilish, the pagan, the degenerate. This strange hiatus lasted until swimming was virtually reinvented by the British at the turn of the nineteenth century, specifically at Eton.

I suppose that this *is* what happened; though the idea that a killjoy Grundyism can account for the suppression for over a thousand years of something so fundamentally natural to human beings as wallowing in water does seem simplistic. Sprawson would no doubt argue that they did wallow, at various times and places and with more or less furtiveness. Edward II and Sir Philip Sidney, after all, were renowned as swimmers. The point is that swimming strokes were not formalized, and neither were swimmers heroic, until the revival of interest in classical antiquity coincided with the changed attitudes to water in general that resulted from the growth of rationalism.

When the 20-year-old Benjamin Franklin swam in the Thames at London in 1726, he was watched by dozens of impressed onlookers. Ahead of his time as ever, he was really the advance guard of those sensual and enquiring minds who began seriously flirting with water later that century. Goethe swam all year

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round in the river at the bottom of his garden in Weimar, equally the pastoral-pagan of early German romanticism and the observant scientist. This was, of course, precisely the era of Cook's voyages, of growing curiosity about the properties and physics of water and the aquatic world.

Goethe was more a latter-day Renaissance man than a great swimmer. The heroics began, perhaps predictably, with the Lit. mob in England. From the turn of the nineteenth century, poets and artists with the traditional upper-class public school heritage of a classical education, Greek libidinal yearnings and the regular floggings that inured them to the freezing waters of northern Europe, began a cult of swimming that quickly burgeoned and eventually had everyone else in Europe and America stripping off and plunging in. The example was set by Shelley (an indifferent swimmer who clearly wanted to drown), Byron (whose physical deformity was annulled in the water), Trelawney, Swinburne. The movement was much helped by the increasing popularity of European travel, principally by educated young aristos going to the Mediterranean to see for themselves the very places whose resonance had echoed through their childhoods in Greek and Latin verse.

This is a book that could only have been written by someone who is himself in the grip of water, who swims his way about the world in melancholy acts of homage at places where Naiads once disported in limpid rivers that today have shrunk to a muddy sump behind a soft drink factory on the outskirts of Athens. He makes a mournful pilgrimage through such famous American baths as still survive (it was in the baths of the New Orleans Athletic Club that the eponymous black masseur plied his trade in the Tennessee Williams story); he swims the Hellespont and he tries to swim the Tagus (he was arrested in midstream). This private mixture of homage and physicality gives a proper unity of tone, the authorial cement.

But it is not consistently strong; and in the overall absence of any real thesis there is a constant tugging beneath the surface, as if the book half wanted to drift away downstream toward the shallows of anthology and become *The Pantheon Book of Swimming*. Just occasionally one longs for a cool subversive comment to surface suddenly in the middle of Parson's Pleasure or the Aegean and ruffle the drowsy litany of Shelleys and Trelawneys and Byrons. No sooner voiced, though, this demur feels churlish, especially after the chapter on American swimming, whose Art. and Lit. figures (Thomas Eakins, Whitman, Jack London, Scott & Zelda) elide so gracefully into the Johnny Weissmullers of Hollywood. It was the reinvigoration of a Hollywood that England so crucially lacked by then. After all that pioneering there was little left but a yearning fag-end (as one might say) of Uranism. Rupert Brooke and the Greek ideals were dead. World War I effectively did for English swimming as it had for so many of its swimmers.

I do wish Sprawson had tried to go a little deeper into why people swim, why they are so fascinated by water. Fashion is not good enough an explanation. He has a flimsy page on possible psychological theories, but one wants more, and odder, interpolations. (Suddenly I wondered if it might be interesting to do a history of drowning.) Instead, Sprawson offers us a limp "It is generally accepted"—"It is generally accepted that in the area of the unconscious, water in any form and immersion in it suggests a hidden desire for a return to the security and irresponsibility of the womb and its amniotic waters."

To support this observation, he cites the example given by Freud of a woman who dreamed of diving through a reflection of the moon in a lake where she had once been on holiday. Sprawson's account is that Freud interpreted this as "the patient's desire to return through the buttocks that gave birth (the pale moon) to the dark waters of the uterus." Unfortunately he misreads the case, neatly reversing what Freud actually thought. The patient's image, far from meaning "back to the womb," stood for her being *re-born* through her analysis. It is a small point in the context of this book, perhaps, but it does make the whole concept of "back to the womb" more than usually foolish as an explanation for anything, especially when one has just been reading accounts of Shelley and various fanatical swimmers who, far from wishing to retreat into a snug, dark, secure nest, were in love (often fatally) with the boundless, the dangerous, the extinguishing, the strangely lit.

Maybe this is the point where we throw out the analytical clichés about the uterus and speculate more about *Homo*'s aquatic origins. Since the oceans predated the first womb by hundreds of millions of years, dreams of the womb might have less to do with security than with a more remote and inchoate yearning for the ocean. We are genetically and racially too powerfully linked with it; it is too much in our blood for the usual explanations to be satisfactory. Now and then in Sprawson's text I found myself wishing that the fragments of such speculation had been larger and more thorough.

Just as there is something unanswered in that huge gap of years when Europeans apparently didn't swim, so there are mysterious things behind the human race's relationship with water. Few swimmers may have the eye of a Goethe or of a fledgling oceanographer, but sooner or later most find themselves to some extent wallowing in the numinous, even if they don't like to talk about it. (Unless, of course, they're Baptists.) At this level what else is swimming itself but a metaphor, an activity that stands for an obscure desire? It's an uneasy topic. Merging with the infinite? How embarrassing! Of course not: we swim to get from A to B, for fitness, for fun, to cool off, show off ... As soon as we scoop them up, the explanations drain away between our fingers.

As it stands, there is nothing else like Sprawson's book. Its very title suggests the ghosts of an irrecoverable past, for the late twentieth-century Olympic swimmer is no longer truly heroic, just a machine for winning races. Long gone is that magical moment when Europe and America, after centuries of abstinence, rediscovered an estranged element with the ecstasy of Brooke's "swimmers into cleanness leaping." For all our own assiduous paganism—for all the surfing, sailboarding, boating, water-skiing, beach holidays and the general democratization of water sports (many of them

Hermit crab

for Sue and Wally

A drifter, or a permanent house-guest,
He scrabbles through the stones, and can even scale
The flaked palm-bark, towing along his latest
Lodging, a cast-off periwinkle shell.
Isn't he weighed down? Does his house not pinch?
The sea urchin, a distant relative,
Must haul his spiny armor each slow inch
By tooth only—sometimes, it's best to live
Nowhere, and yet be anywhere at home.

That's the riddle of his weird housekeeping:
Does he remember how he wears each welcome
Out in its turn, and turns himself out creeping
Unbodied through the sand, grinding and rude,
And does he feel a kind of gratitude?

CRAIG ANTHONY ARNOLD

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unabashedly Roman), something revelatory has vanished. It makes Sprawson's view as grandly nostalgic and as authentically modern as Conrad's. One way and another our sea still contrives to end with the nineteenth century. This present era has yet to rediscover a way of writing the ocean that does not imply the wistful, the backward glance, the sense of loss.

JAMES HAMILTON-PATERSON is the author of *The Great Deep*, forthcoming in paperback from Henry Holt.

The Activist as Hero

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

Never Stop Running: Allard Lowenstein and the Struggle to Save American Liberalism by William H. Chafe

(Basic Books, 576 pp., $28)

Allard Lowenstein came of age at a time when college students were far more interested in cars than in causes or candidates. "We are the privileged and antiseptic generation," said Lowenstein in a speech in 1956 to student leaders. "We move in the backwater of great events, well clothed, well housed and well fed. Struggle is not our hallmark and greatness is not our necessity." But Lowenstein proved the exception. While much of America dozed, he burned bright. He virtually founded the student movement of the 1950s, which later gave birth to SDS and the New Left. He defined the politics of post-New Deal liberalism: militantly anti-Communist (Lowenstein called Communists "Nazis with promises"), and devoted to fostering civil rights in the United States and democratic reform abroad. In the late '50s, he undertook a personal crusade against South African apartheid, exposing that country's reign of terror in neighboring Namibia.

In the next decade, Lowenstein played a formative and controversial role in the movements for civil rights and against the war. He championed voter registration in Mississippi, but then broke with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was leading the struggle, over its willingness to work with Communists and, later, its espousal of Black Power. To stop the Vietnam War, he was one of the organizers of the successful effort to force Lyndon Johnson off the Democratic ticket by recruiting Eugene McCarthy to run against him. He deeply influenced a generation of Democratic political leaders, including Senators Bill Bradley, Bob Kerrey and Joe Lieberman and Congressmen Howard Berman and Barney Frank.

In the '70s Lowenstein suffered a fate parallel to the fate of the movements that he helped spawn. He was defeated three times for Congress. His marriage—sustained against a background of homosexual dalliances and a frenetic political life—fell apart. In March 1980, in New York, as he was aiding Senator Ted Kennedy's faltering presidential bid, he was felled by seven bullets from a man named Dennis Sweeney, a former disciple who had gone crazy and imagined that Lowenstein had planted electrodes inside his brain. Lowenstein was 51.

Lowenstein's turbulent life is a window into some of the most important and novel developments of postwar American politics: the critical role played by college students—never at the forefront of American politics before—in liberal and left-wing movements; the heady rise and precipitous decline of both the civil rights and antiwar movements. His life also provides a painful glimpse into the conflict between public and private personae that, in one form or another, has afflicted many politicians and political leaders.

When Lowenstein died, some writers who tried to plumb the complexity of his life found their work drowned in controversy. Former Stanford draft protester David Harris, who had been one of Lowenstein's protégés, wrote a sensitive portrait of Lowenstein and Sweeney for *The New York Times Magazine*, but under pressure from Lowenstein's political associates, *The Times*' editors excised any mention of Lowenstein's homosexual impulses, which Lowenstein never publicly acknowledged, but which Harris and Sweeney had personally experienced. And Teresa Carpenter was savaged for mentioning Lowenstein's homosexual experiences in a profile in *The Village Voice*.

Other writers wove webs of dark conspiracy around Lowenstein's life. A former law professor wrote a tendentious tome charging that Lowenstein, who was president of the National Students Association (NSA) before it was funded by the CIA, was a longtime CIA agent. The book was condemned by the knowledgeable, and ignored by everyone else.

Now, as memories of Lowenstein dim, William H. Chafe, who teaches history at Duke University, has written an excellent biography that does justice to the political career and the personal life. Not all Chafe's interpretations are sound, but the facts are here, unearthed from Lowenstein's papers, including his diary and personal letters, and from interviews with Lowenstein's family, friends and political associates. Chafe reveals the most intimate details of Lowenstein's personal life without indulging in sensationalism or psychobabble. He doesn't reduce Lowenstein's political career to personal pathology, but he shows how Lowenstein's inner turmoil shaped and even abetted his political career.

Lowenstein was the son of immigrant parents. His father, Gabriel, fled to the United States from Russia after taking part in the revolution of 1905. Gabriel Lowenstein earned a doctorate as a chemist but, determined to raise his family in comfort, gave up the lowly salary of a junior instructor at Columbia Medical School to join his brothers in a lucrative restaurant business in Manhattan. Allard was brought up in suburban Harrison, New York and was sent to the Horace Mann school. Throughout his life he received an income from the family restaurant business. He never had to worry about making a living.

A supporter of Eugene Debs and later of Norman Thomas's Socialist Party, Gabriel Lowenstein imparted to his son an immigrant's patriotism and dream of assimilation *and* a Socialist's hatred of communism. Allard acquired the Socialists' respect for electoral democracy and their contempt for soapbox revolutionism. As a precocious 8-year-old, he avidly followed the twists of the Spanish Civil War, favoring American intervention against the Phalange, but eventually blaming the Communists as much as Franco for the republic's defeat. Unlike his father and the Socialists, however, Lowenstein had little interest in the class struggle or the labor movement. His inherited socialism was a democratic idealism that meshed nicely with the liberalism of his heroes, Eleanor Roosevelt and former North Carolina Senator Frank Porter Graham, who incurred

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defeat in 1950 when he refused to join an anti-civil rights filibuster.

Lowenstein's childhood was the stuff of a psychiatric case history. His mother Augusta died of cancer a year after he was born. His father remarried quickly and, out of a perverse grief, sought to wipe away the memory of his first wife. Allard learned of his real mother inadvertently, when he was 14. Yet he never discussed her with his father. It remained a dark secret that corrupted the relationship between them, and between the young man and his stepmother. At that same age, moreover, Lowenstein discovered that he could be sexually aroused by boys. Though he was also attracted to women, the realization—in 1943—that he was attracted to men shattered his self-image. "The urge I get when I see certain boys is getting out of control," Lowenstein wrote at the time in his diary. "God, God, what will I do?"

Lowenstein, who had been a model child, began to rebel against his parents. He stopped getting good grades in school. He scorned his stepmother's devout Judaism. He responded to his father's demands for neatness and punctuality by becoming congenitally messy and late. And he defied his father by attending the University of North Carolina rather than Columbia or Harvard. He remained fiercely ambitious—he embraced his father's wish that he someday win national office—but as he approached the pinnacle of his ambition, he unaccountably acted in a manner that would ensure his fall. As Chafe recounts, in three successive elections in 1970, 1972 and 1974, Lowenstein picked the race that he was least likely to win.

Lowenstein also rebelled from what he saw as his own nature. The revelations about his mother and his sexuality colored his view of himself. He had moderately good looks, marred only by a receding hairline and owlish eyes, but he became convinced that he was ugly. He grew ashamed of his Jewishness. At Chapel Hill, Lowenstein attended a Presbyterian church and sought out non-Jewish friends. In his diary, he exulted that of his 150 friends, "113 of them [were] Protestant!"

He led an obsessively normal social life. He collected friends; he was rarely without a serious relationship with a woman and in 1965 he married Jennifer Lyman, the daughter of a Boston Brahmin family. But under cover of night, Lowenstein sought to be physically close to what Chafe calls the "blossoming WASPy men" who became his political protégés. He would have them make his appointments and drive him to speeches and meetings, and then to a motel. Lowenstein would insist on a room with one bed, and in bed he would hold them and hug them. When they protested that they were not homosexual, he would indignantly deny that his interests were sexual. Chafe says that Lowenstein did have some more overtly sexual relationships with men, but none of them were lasting.

Lowenstein's personal travail certainly influenced his political convictions. His private conception of himself as a marginal outsider, even an outcast, reinforced his own identification with social underdogs. While on a personal level Lowenstein sought to flee the source of his own shame, he became a fervent champion of Jews who were victimized by anti-Semitism, Negroes in Mississippi, South African blacks, Vietnamese peasants and (later) gays. He sought for these groups the same thing that he sought for himself: undifferentiated assimilation. He had no patience with ethnic pluralism or racial nationalism. He even opposed the formation of Israel as "an unhealthy expression of race nationalism."

Lowenstein's flight from himself also shaped his commitment to politics and to public life. He sought in politics what he lacked in his personal affairs: clear victories, love and adulation without intimacy. Lowenstein's public pace was frenetic—designed, Chafe argues, to divert himself from his private fears. "He wanted a wife yet appeared unable to proceed in a way likely to produce that alternative. He craved intimacy with men but ran away from confronting all the inner conflicts and secret desires that lasting intimacy of that kind might involve," Chafe writes. "Instead, he became someone devoted to causes and to movements on behalf of those causes—as though sheer activity provided the best means of escaping his problems and enhancing his self-image."

It is important to remember that unconscious motives do not invalidate conscious acts. Lowenstein was probably a lousy husband and took advantage of his friendships with younger men, but like many successful political leaders, his ragged personal life was a kind of foundation for his public effectiveness. Chafe acknowledges that Lowenstein's "capacity to inspire by embracing the noble and the ideal [was] dependent on his need to avoid the darker, less attractive side of himself."

Lowenstein's capacity for self-delusion also did not lead to political denial and hypocrisy. Though he initially pronounced his name "Lowenstine" to avoid being identified as Jewish, he protested any hint of anti-Semitism that he encountered. When he arrived at Chapel Hill in 1946, his first political act was to author a complaint to the president of the university that Jews were being segregated in dormitory assignments. As a G.I. stationed in Manheim, Germany in 1954, he sought out the small, remaining Jewish community and attended its synagogue, even though he had little interest in religion. In the '70s,

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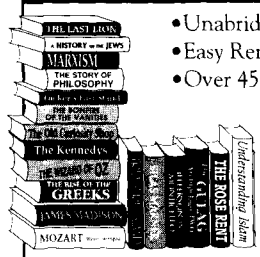

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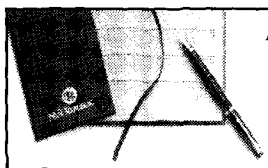

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while he was still hiding his own bisexuality, Lowenstein worked with the fledgling gay rights movement against Anita Bryant and the Briggs Amendment in California.

Indeed, Lowenstein's combustible mix of personal angst and political idealism may have peculiarly equipped him to be a leader of the new political movements of the 1950s and the 1960s. Even though he was born in 1929 to a prior generation, he ended up the prototype of a new generation of movement leaders: unmarried, unsettled, unkempt and unconcerned about making a living. His friend and conservative counterpart William F. Buckley Jr. said of him, "He was, in our time, *the* original activist."

Lowenstein's political rise coincided with the rise of the student movement. Student movements had existed before, to be sure, but had been at best junior adjuncts of adult counterparts. In the 1960s, they acquired a life of their own. SNCC, founded by Southern black students in 1960, displaced Martin Luther King Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference at the center of the southern civil rights movement, while the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) organized the first major demonstration against the Vietnam War.

The emergence of college students as a political force reflected changes in American society and the American economy. Enormous advances in technology during the early twentieth century reduced the amount of labor time that Americans had to spend producing the necessities of life, and opened up a new area that could potentially be devoted to leisure and education. Beginning after World War II, Americans were encouraged to finish high school and (with the help of the G.I. bill, among other things) to attend college. In 1940, 15.6 percent of 18- to 21-year-olds were in college; by 1970, 51.4 percent were. This diffusion of education was only tangentially related to adult work requirements or social responsibilities. Quite the contrary. The new period of education created an extended transition between childhood and work and between puberty and adulthood. The new group of 14- to 22-year-old Americans, called "adolescents" by psychologists, sought to fill it with sexual experimentation, new forms of cultural expression, drugs, delinquency and finally a new politics.

The student movement of the 1950s was tiny and insignificant. But its preoccupation with racial equality and international human rights laid the basis for the mass antiwar and civil rights movements of the decade that followed. The new generation's political ideals were initially drawn from the democratic vision of cold war liberalism, but in contrast to the adult brand of liberalism they were largely divorced from concern with day-to-day economics. The new generation could understand the plight of an unemployed and disfranchised black, but not necessarily that of a suburban family of four buried under house and car payments. If anything, the student liberals and leftists felt at odds with anyone who had "settled down" and "joined the rat race."

Lowenstein lived very much in the style of a later generation of activists: after graduating from Chapel Hill in 1950, he flitted from school to school, gaining a law degree at Yale and then attending graduate school in history at the University of North Carolina. Unlike his contemporaries, he didn't get married upon graduation. Later, even when he was married with children and serving as a congressman, he still lived the life of an adolescent, refusing to rent his own apartment in Washington and preferring to spend the night with friends.

Raised in comfort, and designated by his father to pursue larger ends than making a living, he sought what the '60s called "meaning" rather than material gain, and he found it in liberal politics. Politics was not an occupation, it was a way of affecting history and transcending mortality. The phrase "making a difference" is now an advertising cliché, but it was more or less original in American politics with Lowenstein. He told students, as David Harris recalled in his memoir *Dreams Die Hard*, that "one person can make an immense difference and that the course of history itself can be shaped by a single decision." Harris's response was typical: "My own adolescent sense of worthlessness was rampant enough so that to hear that I mattered was a need as great as any I then possessed. Allard hooked onto it right away."

As early as 1950, Lowenstein was also sounding political themes that would rouse a generation of student activists. Because of his own circumstances, he identified politics with the pursuit of democratic ideals rather than material interest. He wanted an increasingly affluent America to live up to its own ideals—by franchising Mississippi blacks and helping to eliminate apartheid. "Can we deserve to survive," he told one student group, "if indifference pales grandness into pettiness and national success, measured materially, blinds us to troublous fact outside our borders and inures us to bypassed humanity outside our circles?" As Chafe points out, SDS's Port Huron statement of 1962 ("We are a generation bred in at least modest comfort ... looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit") was largely a gloss on Lowenstein's earlier speeches. So were John Kennedy's and Robert Kennedy's later appeals to the young.

No campus Lowenstein visited was ever quite the same after he left. In 1961, for instance, Lowenstein spent a year at Stanford, as an assistant dean of students. He was charged with invigorating the dormitories on campus, which had been relegated to second-class status by the college's fraternity system. Lowenstein turned the relationship on its head. Dormitory students took over student government, and Stanford became a hotbed of student radicalism. John Steinbruner, now a policy expert at the Brookings Institution in Washington, remembers that "when I went to Stanford in 1959, it was very, very conservative and insular and isolated from the world. [By 1963] the university had just totally transformed itself. And Al was probably the single most important figure in that transition."

During the tempestuous '60s, Lowenstein reached the peak of his influence, but also of his notoriety. In Mississippi in 1963, he helped SNCC to gain national attention by recruiting white students to help stage a mock election in which disfranchised blacks voted for a slate of candidates. But he broke with SNCC the next year over its cooperation with the Communist-founded National Lawyers' Guild and over the first hints of Black Power. At the Democratic convention that year, SNCC blamed him for brokering the uneven compromise between Johnson and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, although Chafe absolves him of an instrumental role. He became the leading liberal organizer against the Vietnam War, but denounced and was denounced by SDS and other radical organizers.

By the late '60s, Lowenstein had become widely hated by the revolutionary left. SDS members attempted to disrupt his speeches on campus—at Grinnell, SDSers dumped garbage on the stage while he spoke. Referring to his former connection with the National Student Association, Tom Hayden dismissed him as a "professional, CIA-oriented politician." Chafe, who has a rose-colored view of the New Left, often takes the side of Lowenstein's critics. He chides Lowenstein for his "obsession" with communism and for ignoring the "serious and disciplined" character of the New Left. Chafe is wrong, and this mistake mars his book. Lowenstein's criticisms of the revolutionary New Left that emerged in the mid-'60s were proven correct.

Lowenstein had several abiding and justifiable differences with the revolutionary New Left of Weatherman, the Revolutionary Union, the Venceremos

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Brigade and the Black Panther Party. He did not reject demonstrations and protests, but he believed that they had to be directed toward creating change through the electoral system and the Democratic Party. "When someone can explain to me what makes it possible to justify burning down a building at Stanford in the name of stopping the war in Vietnam," he said in 1969, "then I will be willing to discuss whether those tactics are in fact justifiable." More broadly, Lowenstein was a deeply patriotic American. He never adopted the apocalyptic view of America—or "Amerika"—that became prevalent in the New Left. He opposed those, he said, who "would hate America rather than save it." He handed out his American flag pins and touted his own service in the army. He visited Vietnam War veterans and spoke at American Legion halls.

Lowenstein also insisted that liberals and the New Left should not work with Communist and pro-Communist organizations, even if they ostensibly shared the same immediate goals. Back in 1950, when he was president of the NSA, he attacked Eastern European Communists for using the International Union of Students to advance their secret agenda—a charge that was confirmed after the organization expelled Tito's Yugoslavia.

In the '60s, Lowenstein argued that Communist and Maoist sects were trying to manipulate the civil rights and antiwar movements for their own ends. Maybe Lowenstein went too far at times—not recognizing that many young activists, bitter and disillusioned by the continuation of the war and racial inequality, were turning toward sectarian revolutionary fantasies on their own accord. But in general, he was right. SDS's downfall, for instance, was accelerated by the activities of the Maoist Progressive Labor Party.

Lowenstein achieved his greatest political success when he began organizing the "dump Johnson movement" in May 1967. Barney Frank, along with other associates, initially pronounced him "crazy" for thinking he could "upset a sitting president with the power of Lyndon Johnson." The next year Lowenstein was elected to Congress from Long Island in a Republican district, an upset victory no less. But it was all downhill from there. In 1970 New York Republicans reapportioned his district to reduce the number of Democrats, and his Republican opponent, aided by the Nixon hatchet-man Murray Chotiner, ran a successful gutter-level campaign impugning Lowenstein's patriotism. In 1972 he failed to win the congressional primary in an ethnic Brooklyn district, and in 1974 he failed to win back his old Long Island seat.

A despondent Lowenstein sought the reason for his defeat and the movement's decline in the unscrupulous actions of his adversaries. Believing that the collapse of liberalism was precipitated by Robert Kennedy's death ("Had he lived we would not be arguing about whether the system worked," he wrote), Lowenstein wasted several years attempting to prove that a great conspiracy had plotted the deaths of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. and was also responsible for his own political downfall. Explaining his research, Lowenstein told an interviewer, "Clearly someone, somewhere might have organized some of the events that had changed America. The implications of that possibility were staggering, and drove me to take a belated look at the assassinations."

During these years, Lowenstein lost the source of his strength as an agitator. Before that, in the '60s, he had shared the New Left's passion for social justice, but not its millenarian fantasies and frenzy. Now, defeated and alone—his wife left him after he insisted on running again in 1974—he succumbed to the dark side of those fantasies, looking behind the fanatic glance of Lee Harvey Oswald and Sirhan Sirhan for a force of evil that would explain his own and his movement's decline. (Two decades later, the left is still at it: witness Oliver Stone's *JFK*.)

In fact, the decline of liberalism and the New Left in the '70s did not result from conspiracies, but from the limitations of Lowenstein's post-New Deal faith. Lowenstein's liberalism and the New Left's radicalism were forged during a period of assured prosperity when a new group of Americans—divorced from concern about their own economic future—sought to redeem America's democratic promise at home and in the world. It was different from the old New Deal liberalism that stirred Lyndon Johnson or Hubert Humphrey. It was based in campuses and the upper-middle-class enclaves of Manhattan and Hollywood rather than in labor unions, neighborhood bars and farmer cooperatives. The proponents of this new politics were well suited to organize protests against the Vietnam War, but not to win votes from Americans who, as the post-war boom ended, became preoccupied with wages, prices and neighborhood schools and crime.

Unlike many New Left activists, Lowenstein was never hostile to middle-class Americans. He simply did not share their concerns. When he was in Congress, his wife described him as providing "constituent services for the Western hemisphere." In 1972, when he tried to win election in a middle-income Italian and Jewish district, he had difficulty communicating with voters. Describing Lowenstein's appearance at kaffeeklatsches in Italian neighborhoods, one aide said, "I swear to God, he'd be there for maybe ten minutes and start in about sorties over Vietnam."

Many of the liberal and left-wing politicians who came of age in the '50s and '60s shared Lowenstein's preoccupations. Politicians like Gary Hart and Bill Bradley appeared comfortable in the higher realm of ideas, but ill at ease in bowling alleys and shopping centers. They would become passionate discussing the fate of the Soviet Union but dull and dispirited discussing wages and jobs. Eventually, they either adjusted or abandoned politics.

Chafe thinks that before his murder, Lowenstein might have been on the way to rehabilitating himself. He was reconsidering how he would "define himself sexually," according to Chafe, who speculates that he could have become a "crusading advocate for gay rights." But there is equal evidence that he was still living in the past. He continued to believe that the country's hope lay in the restoration of the Kennedy dynasty. In the first months of 1980, he became consumed with Ted Kennedy's presidential campaign. At the same time, he began to fear his own mortality, even planning the musical program for his funeral. As he rode through New Hampshire in February with Kennedy's nephew Stephen Smith, he told him that ever since Robert Kennedy's death, he had been convinced that he would suffer the same fate. He was not so much anticipating his assassination as acknowledging his own demise as a historical actor.

Had Lowenstein lived, he would probably have been ill at ease both with the identity politics espoused by what remained of the New Left and with the right's covert racial-ethnic appeals. He believed in integration—in the great American community that he and his parents believed they were joining—but also in social and not merely juridical equality. On a personal level, he might have more clearly defined his sexuality, but as Chafe acknowledges, Lowenstein was poised uncomfortably on a continuum from homosexuality to heterosexuality.

Lowenstein never quite fit. He was one of those people who helped define an era without ever quite being part of it. In the complacent '50s, he could still recall leafleting for Franklin Roosevelt in front of his elementary school. In the '60s, he could work feverishly against the Vietnam War or for civil rights without abandoning an old-fashioned faith in American democracy. But by the time of his death, he had become simply too distant from the materialist and self-interested spirit of the times to be effective. He could no longer "make a difference." •

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Curses

DODGING HAS GIVEN WAY TO shrugging, in Washington, about the crime of the Serbs; to shrugging, and to a particularly obscene kind of diplomatic pressure, in which the Americans who failed to save Bosnia are demanding that the Bosnians save America, by signing on the dotted, self-immolating line and taking the world's only superpower off the hook. Some of our suits are also beginning to get a little jittery about the historians who will follow them, and so the number of senior officials whose ardor for action against the Serbian aggression was impeded by other senior officials is growing daily. Even the president counts himself in the company of the blocked. (At the opening ceremonies of the Holocaust Memorial Museum in the spring, when Clinton tried to please the crowd of survivors by speaking grandiloquently about Bosnia and insisting that "never again" would the United States allow a genocide to happen in Europe, my mother turned to me and mordantly said: "He talks about Bosnia like he's somebody else.")

IT APPEARS TO BE THE LOCAL VIEW that the time for action is past, that realism is all that remains; but realism, in the case of American policy toward Bosnia, is just a fancy name for complicity with reality. It is too late, I am sure, for "lift and strike," for the arming of the Bosnians and the disarming (from the air, by Americans) of the Serbians. At the White House, and at the Pentagon, and at the Department of State, "lift and strike" long ago crashed and burned. But is it too late also for "sign and lift"? After all, a partition whose parties cannot defend themselves is not a peace, it is a pause in war. Surely the Bosnians must not be left, eternally and as an element of policy, defenseless. At this late date in the dying of Bosnia, indeed, the arming of the Bosnians is not a way of prolonging the war, it is a way of fixing the peace. It might even be a way of inducing the Bosnians to take the deal; and it poses no threat to Serbia. (Poor, threatened Serbia.) Of "sign and lift," however, I hear nothing.

THE TIME FOR EPIC CURSING IS not past. Readers of the Bible will remember the epic curse (*I take the term from the scholar David Quint*) as an imprecation of special magnitude, a linguistic response to wickedness that seeks to match its scale, a prayer that the punishment share the finality of the crime. "Ye corridors of Foggy Bottom, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you...": that sort of thing. Czeslaw Milosz's poem on page 16 is a fine example of an epic curse. The Balkan disaster has provided rather a large number of objects for rage. Not least among them is, speaking coarsely, Europe. For this much, therefore, Slobodan Milošević has my thanks: he has exposed Europe for what it really is, which is the part of the civilized world that is second to none in its horror of otherness.

FIFTY YEARS AGO there was no room for Jews in Europe. Now there is no room for Muslims in Europe. Those who are shocked by the indolence of the Europeans in the Balkans are forgetting history, and I do not mean the history of the fifteenth or sixteenth or seventeenth century. I mean the history of the twentieth century. This was the century in which more innocent people were slaughtered by European armies in the name of European values than were ever slaughtered by any armies in the name of any values. And the morning after the slaughter, the cunning of history kicked in. The cold war appeared as a brilliant disguise for the killing field.

NO SOONER HAD EUROPE PERPEtrated the most spectacular genocide in history than its eastern half could pose as a group of tolerant nations suffering tyranny and its western half could pose as a group of tolerant nations opposing tyranny. Of course, the eastern half did suffer and the western half did oppose. But the tyranny turns out to have frustrated not only the hunger for freedom. It turns out to have frustrated also the hunger for sameness. Over here we thought that the Soviet empire was evil because it forbade the mind and shackled the spirit. Over there they thought that the Soviet empire was evil also because it forced people to live with people not like themselves. And these outbursts of collective subjectivity should not be dignified as "nationalism." They represent the hoariest, the shabbiest, tribalism.

HOW, THEN, EXPECT THE EUROpeans to confront Serbia? They would have first to confront themselves. I know that I am exaggerating. There is a difference between the torching of a few Muslim homes in Germany and the murder of hundreds of thousands of Muslims in the Balkans. Still, the difference is not so large as to make the similarity trivial. And so I propose that we learn a few ashen lessons from the destiny of Bosnia. First, that the condescension of "the West" toward the rest of the world must end. For many years, and especially during the Reagan and Thatcher years, it has been the custom to describe the states of the post-colonial world, with pity or with contempt, as essentially awash in blood, in ethnic and religious savagery. In the matter of ethnic and religious savagery, however, "the West" has no justification for its strut, no ground for its triumphalism. A contemporary citizen of Sarajevo and a contemporary citizen of Colombo would understand each other perfectly. Second, that the liberalism of "the West" is not a fact of nature, but a fact of culture; not a fate, but an accomplishment. "The West" was not always like this, and in many of its precincts it is not yet like this. When we admire European democracy, we are admiring the self-overcoming of Europe; Spinozas and Mills did not fall from its every tree. Third, that there is no such place as "the West." There is Europe and there is America, and they are distinct chapters in the history of decency. Consider the European tradition of nationalist thought. There is no vision of heterogeneity in that tradition, there is only the anxiety (an admirable one, too) about minorities; but the anxiety about minorities is just a scruple of homogeneity. Its premise is still that otherness is a problem. The distance between the ideal of minority rights and the ideal of a multiethnic society is vast; and it is the distance between the democratic dispensation of Europe and the democratic dispensation of America. If my god was Allah and my skin was brown, I would try the States.

THESE SPECULATIONS ARE NOT all that attenuated. They go to the heart of one of the administration's alibis. It was because the divergence between Europe and the United States was not properly understood that there arose the mistaken notion that the United States could not act except together with Europe. There were many who believed that something should be done, but that the Europeans should do it; but they may as well have believed that nothing should be done. And so nothing was done. An American, I am not at all proud. A Jew, I am not at all surprised.

LEON WIESELTIER

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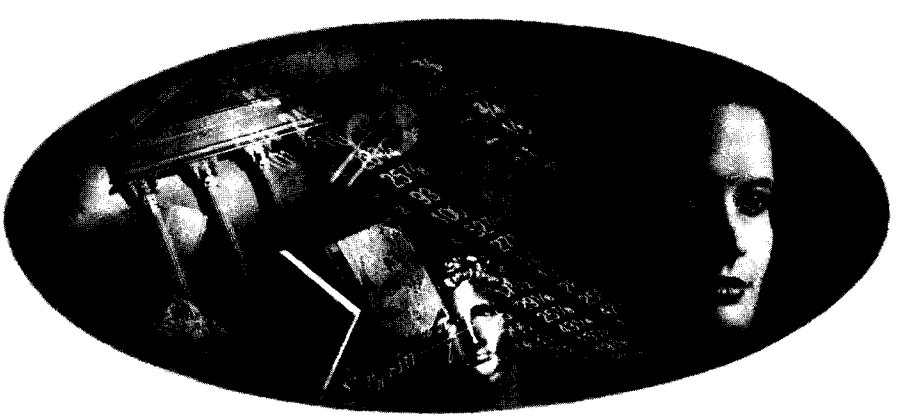

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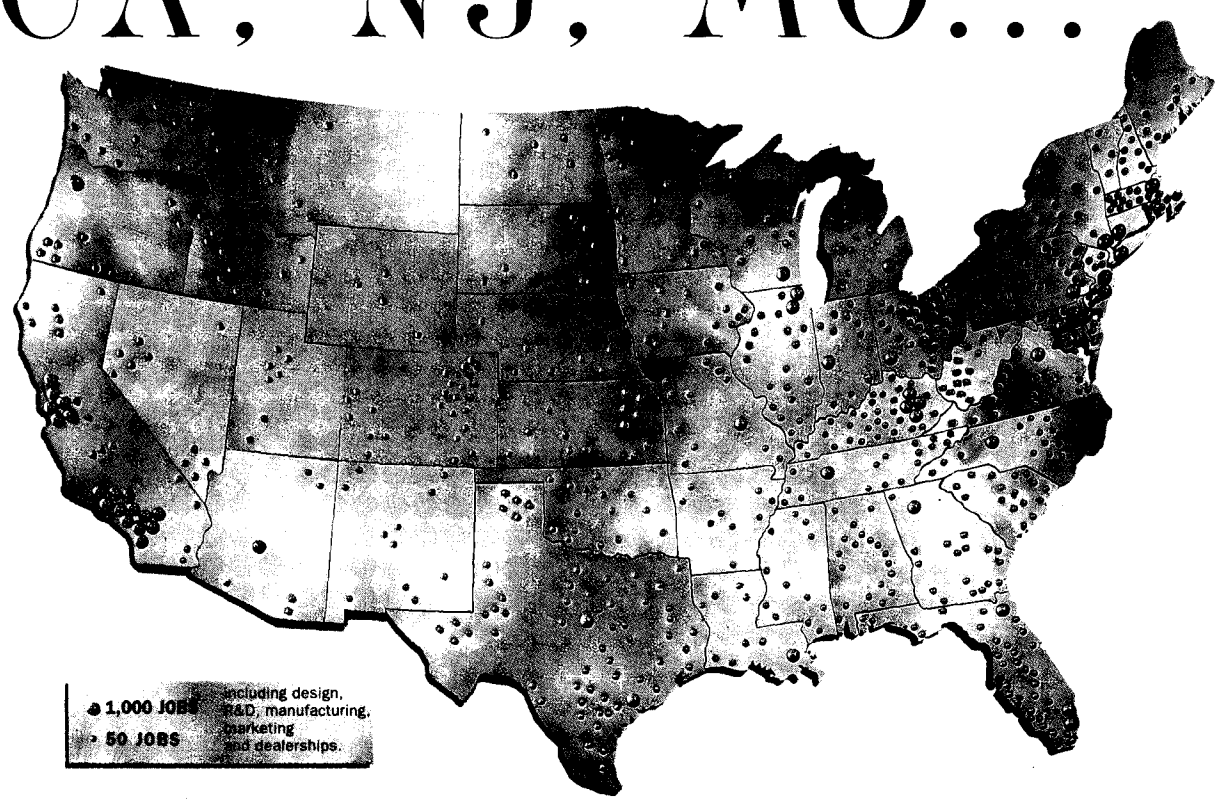

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